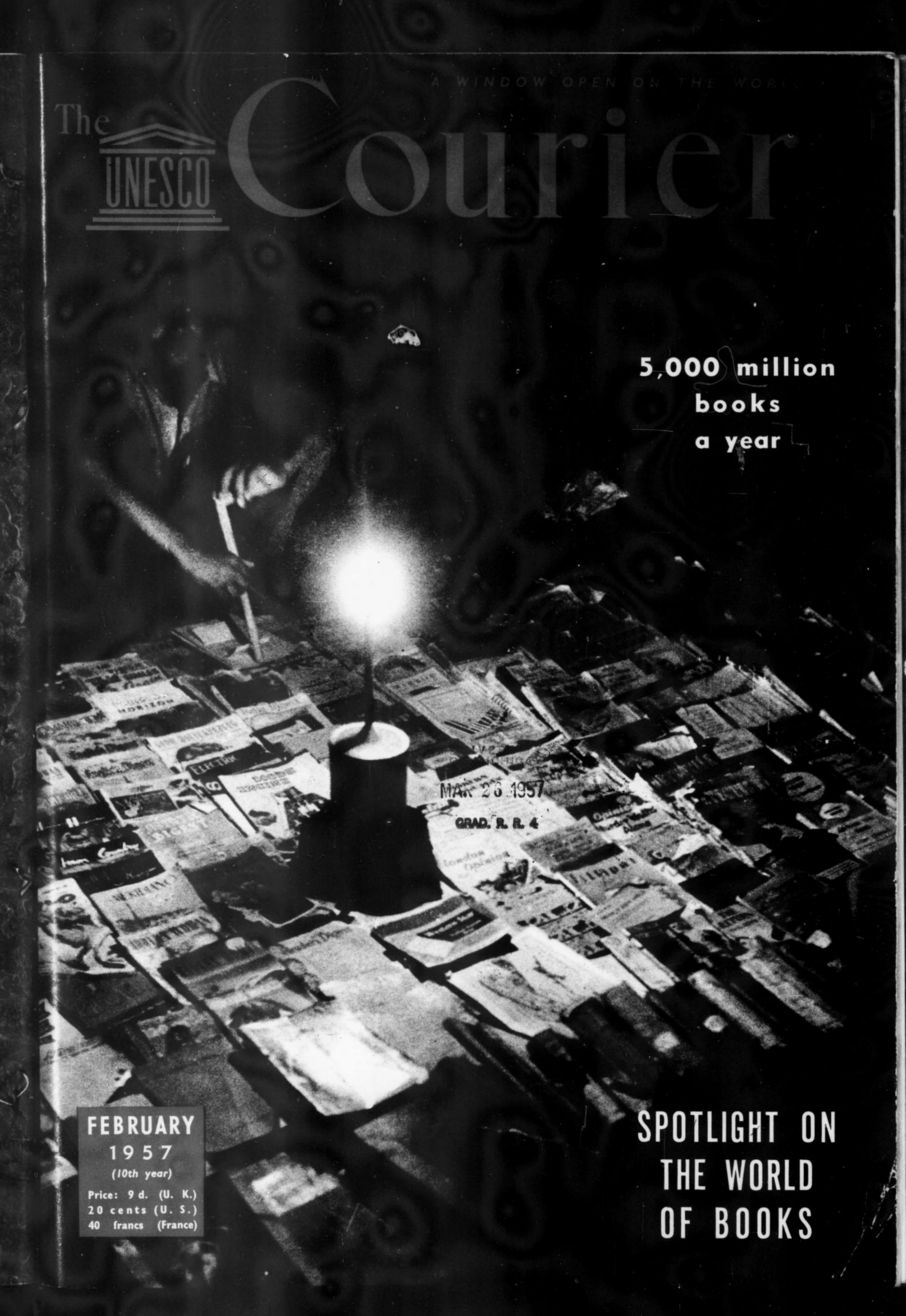
A WINDOW OPEN ON THE WORLD

# The UNESCO Courier



5,000 million
books
a year

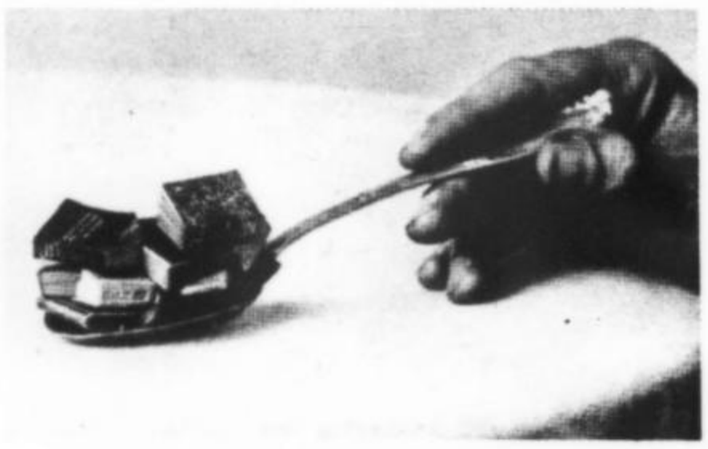
MAR 28 1957
GRAD. R. R. 4

FEBRUARY
1957
*(10th year)*
Price: 9 d. (U. K.)
20 cents (U. S.)
40 francs (France)

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE WORLD OF BOOKS

# GARGANTUA AMONG TOMES

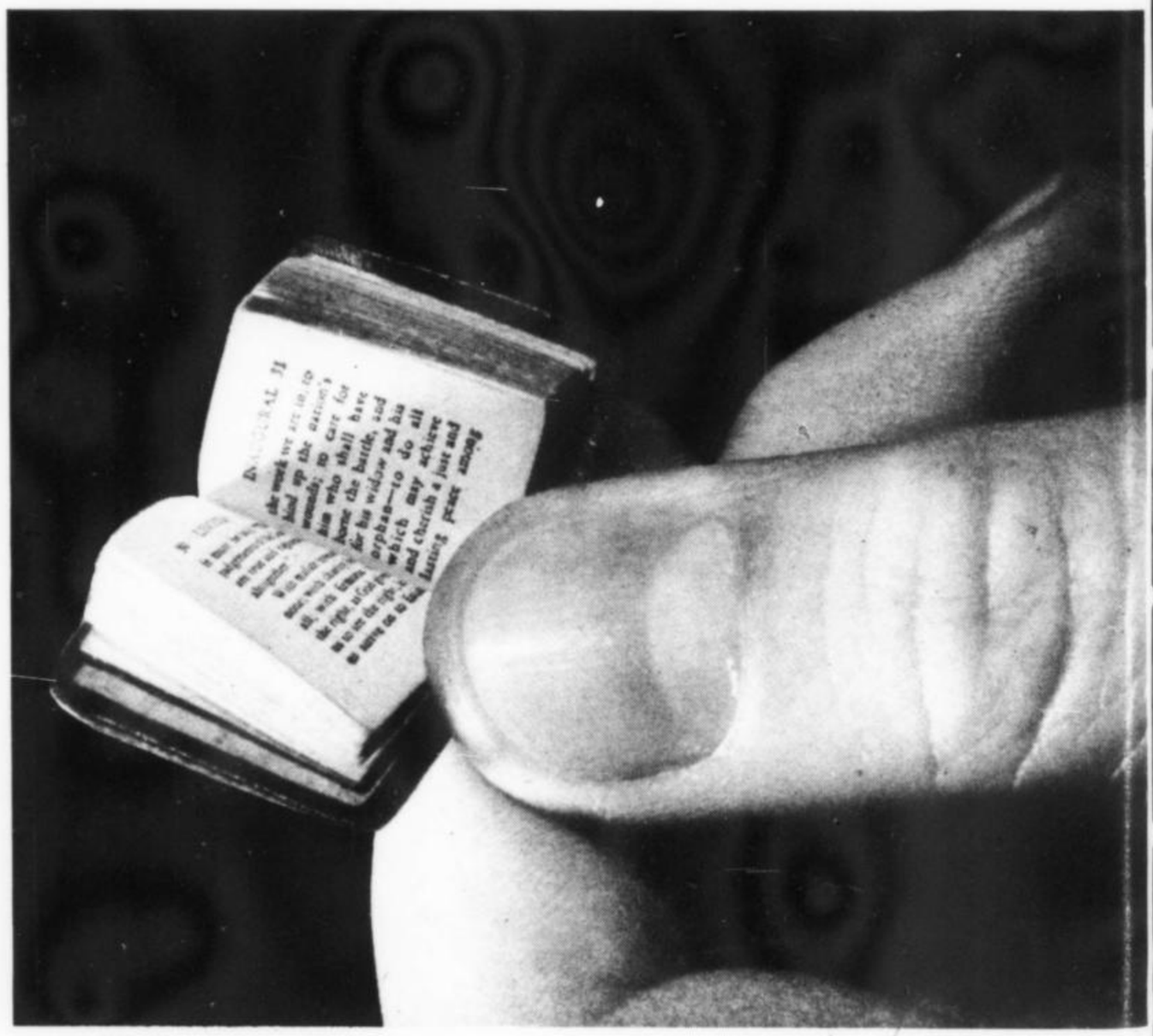
Giant atlas of King Charles II, largest book in British Museum, measures 5 feet 9½ inches by 3 feet 2½ inches, and required eight morocco goatskins for its binding. Each map was engraved on 20 separate copper-plates; sections were almost invisibly joined and hand-coloured. Maps are as fresh as when printed in 17th century. Photo is taken from a 270-page book *Bookmen's Bedlam* (Rutgers Univ. Press, Brunswick, New Jersey, 1955) which its author, Walter Hart Blumenthal describes as "an olio of literary oddities". From Lilliputs to the Goliaths of bookdom; from round and heartshaped books to specimens with twin bindings; from books buried in coffins to those salvaged from sunken ships, Mr. Blumenthal describes the strange sideshow and literary circus of droll, wayward and eccentric specimens of the book world. (For other items from *Bookmen's Bedlam* see pages 15, 16 and 33, and for some photos lent by Mr. Blumenthal, see pages 27 to 30).



# TWELVE BOOKS IN A SOUP SPOON

According to Walter Hart Blumenthal, the dozen minute books held in the soup spoon hold the world's record as the tiniest in their respective fields. They include a Koran; an English dictionary of 12,000 words; A Galileo (half the size of a postage stamp, with 208 pages and probably the smallest volume ever printed from actual type); a Testament; the Mite (up to 1896 the world's most diminutive book); Robert Burns (vellum); Petit Poucet; French Constitution (gold-stamped leather binding); Gita (Sanscrit); Tasche Kalender (1839); Laws of Moses (world's smallest Hebrew book); and Scotch-Irish songs (with music). Thumbnail size volume (right) is a copy of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

From *Bookmen's Bedlam*, © 1955 by W.H. Blumenthal.



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The UNESCO Courier

FEBRUARY 1957 10th YEAR

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## COVER PHOTO

Book vendor in Indian bazaar has aura of mystery as he displays his stock under glare of kerosene lamp. Recent Unesco statistics show that fiction is first choice of book readers in most countries. In India and U.K. it is over 60% of total reading; in U.S. over 50%; in Thailand and Philippines 40%. In Unesco's Delhi Public Library English non-fiction is preferred to fiction. (See page 33)

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OVER 60 countries throughout the world publish books, and about 5,000 million books come off the world's presses each year. That at any rate is about as close as experts can place global book production for there is no general agreement as to what constitutes a book, and even the chief producing countries have failed to adopt a common definition.

The United Kingdom considers that a book is a publication priced at a minimum of sixpence (7 US cents). Ireland and Italy say a book must have at least 100 pages; in Iceland it can have as few as 17; Hungary lays down a minimum of 64 pages. Several countries, among them India, Indonesia and the U.S.S.R., do not distinguish between books and pamphlets and classify them all as books. U.S. book statistics exclude all pamphlets and government publications not sold commercially.

In addition, there is little agreement as to how the production, export and import of books should be recorded. In most countries, it is impossible to estimate accurately the production of books by copies because no one has any precise idea about the production of cheap reprints—paper-backed pocket books, etc. And in their export-import figures, many countries lump books with unknown quantities of other printed matter. Others again, exclude postal book exports and consignments below certain values which play an important part in world trade in books.

UNESCO is working to secure agreement among governmental and other bibliographical agencies on these questions. For example, it has recommended that a book be defined for statistical purposes as a "non-periodical publication containing 49 or more pages"; that both books and pamphlets be included in total annual production, as is now the general practice, but that they be recorded *separately;* that government books, academic papers, reference books, atlases should be included (also under a separate heading) provided they are sold commercially; and that textbooks should not be excluded from national book statistics. On the other hand, it has recommended that governments should include book post exports and all other consignments of books however small they may be.

UNESCO has turned the spotlight on other problems affecting the book trade and the international flow of books. "Books for All," its latest survey of the book trade, reveals that three quarters of all books come from only ten countries, that nine-tenths of all books are produced in only eight languages, and that seventy per cent of the world's translations are made in only four languages.

To this unbalanced and often confused situation is added the complexity of trade barriers to books. Twelve per cent of all countries levy import duties and 70 per cent impose currency restrictions on books. Less than half the world's postal administrations apply a provision of the Universal Postal Convention which allows books to be mailed at half the ordinary rate for printed matter. UNESCO has sponsored an international agreement (now applied by 24 countries) granting duty free entry to books, and the Universal Copyright Convention which gives greater protection to authors and publishers. It is promoting the translation of representative works of literature into various languages, and working "to give the people of all countries access to the printed and published materials produced by any of them."

# ON A STROLL WITH IMMORTAL FRIENDS

*by Gabrielle Cabrini*

**1**

The trade in second-hand books is nowadays an international industry whose annual turnover runs into astronomic figures. Organized on an international scale, it has its own directories of bookshops in many lands. One published in France, for instance, lists 1,163 addresses of book dealers in 13 countries. Another, the "A.B. Bookman's Yearbook," printed in London, gives 5,500 names of second-hand bookshops throughout the world, while a weekly specialist publication, " The Clique" supplies its readers with the titles of some 1,000,000 second-hand books of interest, which, according to still another catalogue, fill 58 different categories and 759 sub-categories. One of the great centres of the trade is Paris where many second-hand book dealers are installed on the banks of the Seine, especially around the cathedral of Notre-Dame (above). Browsing for books among the curious "box stalls" (above, right) is a popular pastime for Parisians who sometimes describe the Seine, along its course through their city, as "a river lined with books and fishermen."

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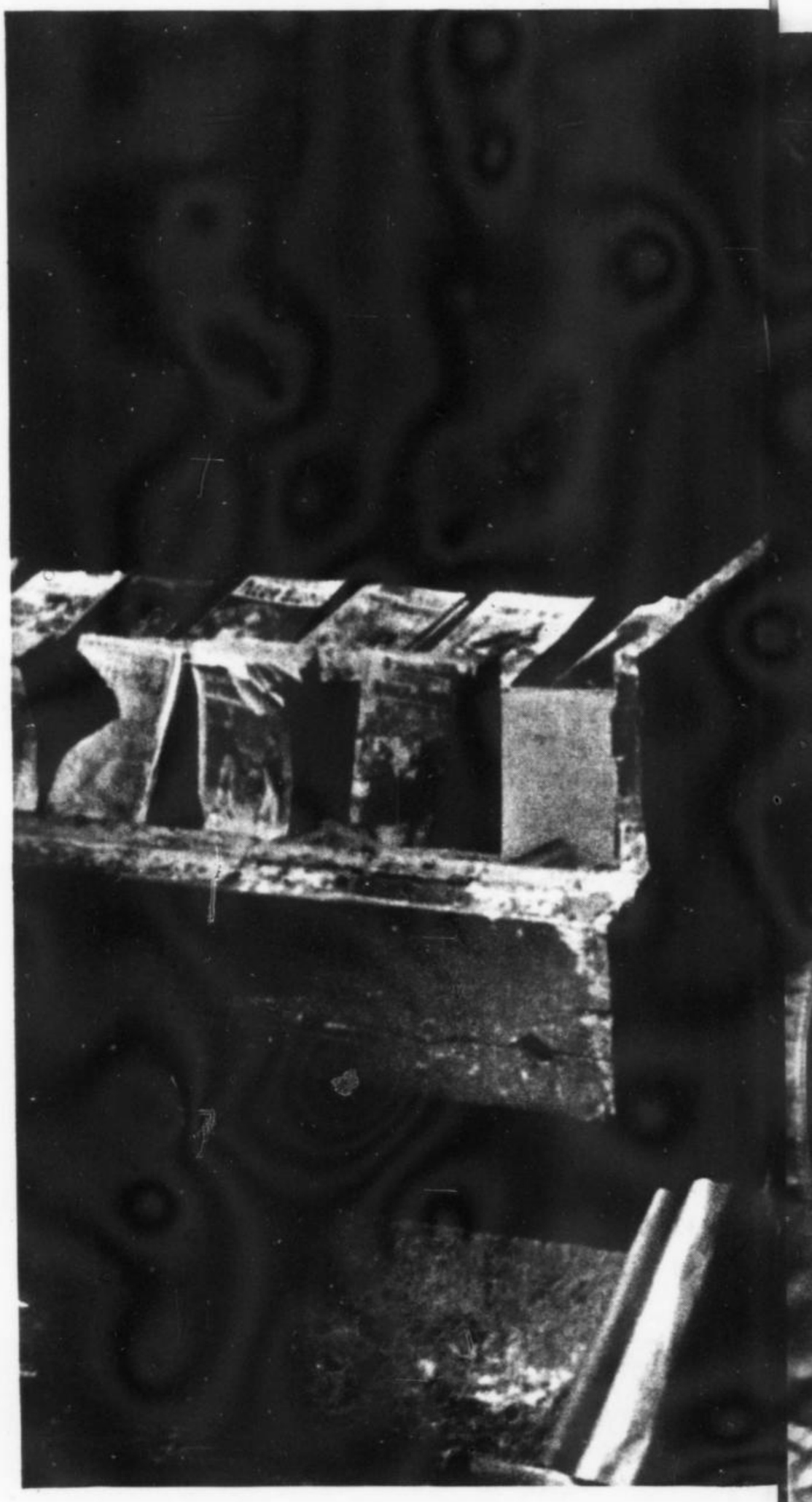

THERE are times in everyone's life when destiny seems to change its course and reshape the future. How many of us have ever thought back to the important milestones in our life and tried to recall the things that seemed to exert a strong influence at those moments of change and decision? We probably would find that, in our childhood at any rate, one book or perhaps several books somehow played a part in changing the course of our existence.

If we put this same question to our family and friends, many of them would certainly tell us that books, standing out like landmarks in a voyage of exploration, had also been decisive factors in their lives. Sometimes books encouraged them to step out more firmly along an already chosen road; sometimes books made them hesitate and finally seek a new path to follow. Like us, they too perhaps heard in a book the call of adventure or found the door to fresh discoveries.

These are universally shared experiences and if we were able to carry our inquiries to other lands we would find that for hundreds of years certain works have formed the very basis of human thought and feeling. The names of their authors are immortal: Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Tolstoy, Victor Hugo... a complete list would fill many pages.

And yet, how many of us ever considered what proportion of these works, which have been a source of delight and heart-searching to us and to so many generations of human beings, were actually conceived and written in our language or even in one of those in which the majority of people have read them?

Down the centuries, poets, philosophers and scholars have all had a share in moulding you, and the men, women and children of your country. If today they could return on earth how many of them could even suspect that it is of them that people are talking in many lands. How surprised they would be to find *their poems* in the hands of a Japanese student, to see that it is *their stories* that set a child a-dreaming in Peru, or to discover that *their teachings,* expounded in strange characters quite unintelligible to them, are being pored over by a host of readers, intent on grasping their inner meaning.

"No man is an island", wrote John Donne, the English poet and divine, three and a half centuries ago. Man's nature prevents him from remaining indifferent to what affects others of his kind. Though separated by languages and customs and often divided by wars, men have always wanted to know and to understand the thoughts, the likes and the dislikes of other peoples—those who wore such funny clothes, those who invaded and overran their country or tried to make it adopt their way of life. For this understanding they needed translations.

The first translations we know of include sacred writings. These were made slowly and tediously for their meaning had to be rendered with perfect fidelity. Later came non-religious texts. It would perhaps be wrong to consider these as translations for those who made them were adapters rather than true translators. In a language they had mastered by diligent study or learned by chance they looked for a world of wonders, costumes and customs to delight and amuse those who would read about them.

Yet while depicting this unfamiliar and exotic world, the adapter, consciously or unconsciously, was careful to preserve certain basic features, certain elements of the known world which enabled the readers in his own country to feel at one with the king and the shepherd, the courtier and the beauty whose adventures, in lands which seemed so different from their own, they followed with a rapt interest.

That is why we sometimes find it hard to believe that certain stories did actually originate in far-off places. Some which seem to have been created in the minds of our own countrymen and to mirror perfectly their outlook and way

Cont'd on next page

# IMMORTAL FRIENDS

*(Continued)*

of thinking have, in fact, reached us after strange journeys across the earth. One of the most remarkable was made by one of the great books of India, the *Panchatantra or* "Five Cases of Wisdom", regarded as India's most outstanding imaginative work. The fables are attributed to a legendary Brahmin named Vishnusarman and are said to have been written for a king of southern India who was famed for his might and learning, but cursed with lazy and ignorant sons. Of the seventy fables and stories in the *Panchatantra,* written between the second and sixth centuries A.D., some have been translated into practically every one of the languages of ancient and modern India.

The Odyssey of these fables led them along devious routes to the Western World, and showed what changes and adaptations a writing can undergo in the course of time. About the 6th century A.D. the fables were translated into Persian, and from Persian into Arabic around 750 A.D. By the 12th century they had been translated from Arabic into Hebrew and a Jewish convert to Christianity, who later became the monk John of Capua, adapted them into Latin. Spanish, French and German language texts followed and Italian versions were produced by Doni (1552) and Firenzuola (1548). The version of Doni was translated into English by Sir Thomas North (*The Morall Philosophie of Doni,* 1601).

The collection became best known in Europe as the fables of Bidpai (derived from the wise Bidpai who tells the stories). In France the ancient storyteller had become "Pilpay the Sage", and the stories were read in the 17th century by the writer Jean de la Fontaine, who, when writing his own famous fables, took ideas from the Indian ones ("I owe most of them to Pilpay", he wrote with some exaggeration) and material which he transposed.

Animal heroes of La Fontaine's fables in Persian.

## Marco fires fever for knowledge

One day the westward journey was halted and Pilpay retraced his steps towards the east in translations and adaptations. La Fontaine's fables, today famous the world over, made their way back to the country of their birth. They were translated into Arabic, Persian and Coptic, and so returned to India where illuminated manuscripts now illustrate many which had set out from there so many centuries earlier.

The same thing happened to the great romances that enthralled the people of the Middle Ages—the Romance of Alexander, the Romance of Tristan and Isolde and many others. Their origins have become so obscure that it is hard to say who was their first and true begetter.

One of the most widely translated books at the end of the Middle Ages was *The Travels of Marco Polo.* This Venetian, most famous of all travellers, recounted in French a fabulous yet real journey to China in the second half of the thirteenth century. His work created in the West an obsession with the treasures and riches of India and "Cathay", the Empire of the Great Khan. It was translated in record time not only into all European languages, but also into all manner of dialects: Genoese, Provencal, Catalan, Aragonese, Tuscan and many others. Yet this first great European "eye witness" account of the Far East was not translated and published in Chinese and Japanese until quite recently.

Fired by the great and successful voyages of discovery, a kind of fever of desire to know and to translate spread over the world. Dazzled by the appearance of new races which seemed to spring from nowhere and delighted by so much diversity, scholars and monks did their best to collect and preserve the treasures of literature from destruction. Many works which can never be replaced, however, fell victim to the flames of war and conquest.

In Mexico alone, dictionaries were compiled of dozens of languages transliterated into Latin characters. And the world continued to shrink as the craving for knowledge grew ever stronger in the West. What were the men who lived in other lands really like? What had the people of ancient times really been like? Collectors—princes, scholars and rich merchants—searched abbeys and monasteries,

Cont'd on page 11

Animals with the plague. Abyssinian manuscript.

# ROUND TRIP FOR BIDPAI THE SAGE

Last year, translations of the celebrated fables of Jean de la Fontaine, the 17th century French writer, were published in nine languages: Danish, German, Spanish, Finnish, Esperanto, Hungarian, Polish, Rumanian and English. These fables have already been translated into most of the world's languages and in this way—through adaptations and translations—they have travelled back to some of the countries from whose stories La Fontaine drew inspiration. First of all, La Fontaine, like many French writers before him, drew on the great wealth of fables attributed to Aesop, the ancient Greek "master of stories". His originality was to revive the fable in verse and to endow it with a realism based on a close observation of beasts and men. La Fontaine also owes a debt, which he acknowledges in his edition of 1678-79, to a collection of Indian fables collected under the title of the *Panchatantra* or "Five Cases of Wisdom". The collection became best known in Europe as the fables of Bidpai (from the wise Bidpai who tells the stories). In the French translation of 1644, Bidpai became "Pilpay the Sage". When La Fontaine's fables were translated into Arabic, Persian and Coptic, "Pilpay" retraced his steps to the East. Eventually, the stories once again reached India, where illuminated manuscripts now illustrate many of them which had set out from that country many centuries before.

Characters from La Fontaine's "The Miller, his Son and the Ass" in Indian guise. (Feuillet de Conches Collection)

# WORLD'S MOST TRANSLATED AUTHORS (1948-1955)

**Table below shows authors whose works have been published in translation at least 100 times in past eight years. (Pearl Buck is first living author and first woman). Photos, opposite, show authors of five countries who have been most translated throughout the world in past eight years (in order of importance from left to right). Table on Page 10 lists most translated authors in 1955 in 15 major translating countries and gives further explanations on table below.**

| AUTHOR | NATIONALITY | 1948-1955 No OF TRANSLATIONS PUBLISHED | 1955 ONLY | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | TRANSLATIONS | COUNTRIES |
| V. I. Lenin | U.S.S.R. | 968 | 371 | 14 |
| The Bible | . . . . | 887 | 99 | 11 |
| J. V. Stalin | U.S.S.R. | 689 | 200 | 12 |
| L. N. Tolstoy | U.S.S.R. | 495 | 105 | 23 |
| M. Gorki | U.S.S.R. | 489 | 102 | 19 |
| C. Dickens | U.K. | 443 | 54 | 18 |
| J. Verne | France | 432 | 92 | 16 |
| W. Shakespeare | U.K. | 424 | 74 | 22 |
| H. Balzac | France | 424 | 50 | 19 |
| K. Marx | Germany | 415 | 61 | 12 |
| F. Engels | Germany | 409 | 64 | 14 |
| H. C. Andersen | Denmark | 366 | 71 | 22 |
| F. M. Dostoievski | U.S.S.R. | 358 | 62 | 18 |
| J. London | U.S.A. | 347 | 55 | 19 |
| R. L. Stevenson | U.K. | 307 | 35 | 13 |
| A. P. Chekhov | U.S.S.R. | 305 | 66 | 19 |
| P. Buck | U.S.A. | 304 | 32 | 17 |
| M. Twain | U.S.A. | 303 | 52 | 16 |
| S. Zweig | Austria | 290 | 41 | 13 |
| A. S. Pushkin | U.S.S.R. | 289 | 61 | 17 |
| A. Dumas (père) | France | 279 | 49 | 18 |
| G. Simenon | Belgium | 273 | 54 | 12 |
| G. de Maupassant | France | 273 | 40 | 16 |
| A. J. Cronin | Ireland | 272 | 44 | 14 |
| A. Christie | U.K. | 264 | 45 | 13 |
| E. S. Gardner | U.S.A. | 261 | 50 | 12 |
| W. S. Maugham | U.K. | 258 | 40 | 16 |
| I. S. Turgenev | U.S.S.R. | 251 | 41 | 18 |
| J. W. Gœthe | Germany | 244 | 32 | 11 |
| J. & W. Grimm | Germany | 235 | 43 | 13 |
| N. V. Gogol | U.S.S.R. | 230 | 35 | 14 |
| Plato | Greece | 229 | 41 | 16 |
| A. Gide | France | 222 | 22 | 8 |
| E. Zola | France | 218 | 37 | 16 |
| J. F. Cooper | U.S.A. | 210 | 30 | 15 |
| W. Johns | U.K. | 208 | 21 | 6 |
| V. Hugo | France | 203 | 37 | 16 |
| R. Rolland | France | 200 | 27 | 12 |
| R. Kipling | U.K. | 196 | 21 | 11 |
| G. Greene | U.K. | 195 | 28 | 12 |
| Z. Grey | U.S.A. | 194 | 33 | 8 |
| D. Defoe | U.K. | 192 | 39 | 15 |
| Arabian Nights | Iran | 186 | 28 | 11 |
| P. Cheyney | U. K. | 180 | 29 | 10 |
| Stendhal | France | 176 | 27 | 14 |
| J. Steinbeck | U.S.A. | 174 | 32 | 14 |
| Homer | Greece | 172 | 20 | 11 |
| E. Wallace | U.K. | 171 | 30 | 9 |
| O. Wilde | U.K. | 167 | 14 | 6 |
| D. du Maurier | U.K. | 166 | 21 | 16 |
| W. Churchill | U.K. | 163 | 6 | 6 |

| AUTHOR | NATIONALITY | 1948-1955 No OF TRANSLATIONS PUBLISHED | 1955 ONLY | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | TRANSLATIONS | COUNTRIES |
| H. Fast | U.S.A. | 163 | 32 | 11 |
| E. Hemingway | U.S.A. | 157 | 35 | 11 |
| Cervantes | Spain | 154 | 24 | 12 |
| Pius XII | . . . . | 151 | 19 | 10 |
| A. Daudet | France | 149 | 19 | 11 |
| S. Lagerlöf | Sweden | 148 | 20 | 8 |
| L. Bromfield | U.S.A. | 145 | 20 | 12 |
| E. R. Burroughs | U.S.A. | 145 | 15 | 7 |
| L. M. Alcott | U.S.A. | 144 | 13 | 6 |
| A. Maurois | France | 143 | 21 | 15 |
| T. Mann | Germany | 142 | 29 | 14 |
| E. A. Poe | U.S.A. | 142 | 19 | 10 |
| F. Mauriac | France | 141 | 29 | 11 |
| W. Scott | U.K. | 141 | 31 | 15 |
| J. Swift | U.K. | 138 | 21 | 11 |
| M. de la Roche | Canada | 138 | 17 | 7 |
| Molière | France | 137 | 13 | 11 |
| V. Baum | U.S.A. | 137 | 13 | 9 |
| G. Flaubert | France | 135 | 19 | 12 |
| A. France | France | 135 | 14 | 9 |
| W. Disney | U.S.A. | 134 | 31 | 6 |
| M. Delly | France | 131 | 24 | 4 |
| E. Blyton | U.K. | 129 | 37 | 9 |
| B. Russell | U.K. | 129 | 19 | 11 |
| I. Ehrenbourg | U.S.S.R. | 128 | 30 | 14 |
| A. N. Tolstoy | U.S.S.R. | 126 | 28 | 12 |
| E. Queen | U.S.A. | 126 | 20 | 12 |
| S. Freud | Austria | 124 | 15 | 7 |
| M. Brand | U.S.A. | 122 | 9 | 5 |
| A. S. Makarenko | U.S.S.R. | 121 | 31 | 9 |
| M. J. Ilin | U.S.S.R. | 120 | 14 | 5 |
| A. Huxley | U.K. | 118 | 11 | 7 |
| H. Sienkiewicz | Poland | 116 | 20 | 11 |
| A. Conan Doyle | U.K. | 116 | 20 | 8 |
| L. Charteris | U.S.A. | 116 | 14 | 4 |
| R. M. Rilke | Germany | 115 | 15 | 7 |
| G. B. Shaw | U.K. | 111 | 12 | 8 |
| Sophocles | Greece | 110 | 13 | 6 |
| J. Galsworthy | U.K. | 110 | 8 | 6 |
| E. Salgari | Italy | 109 | 22 | 3 |
| J. Conrad | U.K. | 109 | 13 | 7 |
| E. Caldwell | U.S.A. | 108 | 13 | 7 |
| J. Dickson Carr | U.S.A. | 106 | 22 | 11 |
| P. G. Wodehouse | U.K. | 106 | 13 | 6 |
| U. Sinclair | U.S.A. | 106 | 11 | 5 |
| H. Melville | U.S.A. | 105 | 18 | 10 |
| H. Hesse | Switzerland | 104 | 17 | 7 |
| J. Hilton | U.K. | 101 | 16 | 12 |
| St Augustine | Roman Empire (Carthage) | 100 | 27 | 9 |
| Voltaire | France | 100 | 11 | 9 |

Table prepared by staff of The Unesco Courier

## MOST TRANSLATED FRENCH AUTHORS

J. VERNE — H. DE BALZAC — A. DUMAS (PERE) — G. DE MAUPASSANT — A. GIDE

## RUSSIAN AUTHORS

L. TOLSTOY — M. GORKI — F. DOSTOIEVSKI — A. CHEKOV — A. PUSHKIN

## BRITISH AUTHORS

C. DICKENS — W. SHAKESPEARE — R. L. STEVENSON — A. J. CRONIN — A. CHRISTIE

## AMERICAN AUTHORS

J. LONDON — P. BUCK — M. TWAIN — E. S. GARDNER — J. F. COOPER

## GERMAN AUTHORS

W. GŒTHE — Wilhelm and Jacob GRIMM — T. MANN — R. M. RILKE

# THEY WERE MOST TRANSLATED BY THESE COUNTRIES IN 1955

| | TITLES |
|---|---|
| **CZECHOSLOVAKIA** | |
| 1. Jules Verne | 14 |
| 2. Lenin | 13 |
| 3. Gorki | 7 |
| 4. Jack London | 6 |
| 5. Goldoni, Mayakowsky, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Mark Twain | 5 |
| **FRANCE** | |
| 1. Chekov | 12 |
| 2. Bible | 11 |
| 3. Hans Andersen | 10 |
| 4. W.E. Johns | 8 |
| 5. Gorki, Erle Stanley Gardner. | 7 |
| **GERMANY** | |
| 1. Bible, Edgar Wallace | 16 |
| 2. Tolstoy, Enid Blyton | 9 |
| 3. Daniel Defoe, Zane Grey, S. Teleford | 8 |
| 4. Robert Louis Stevenson, Pittigrilli, S. Lagerlof, G. Bomans | 7 |
| 5. François Mauriac, Hans Andersen, Lenin, Giono | 6 |
| **INDIA** | |
| 1. Tagore | 14 |
| 2. Gandhi | 11 |
| 3. Lenin | 8 |
| 4. Gorki | 7 |
| 5. S.C. Chattopadhyaya | 6 |
| **ITALY** | |
| 1. Jules Verne | 13 |
| 2. Dickens | 12 |
| 3. Shakespeare | 9 |
| 4. Mark Twain, Delly | 7 |
| 5. Bible, Plato, Dostoïevski, Erle Stanley Gardner, Jack London | 6 |
| **JAPAN** | |
| 1. Maugham, de Maupassant, Tolstoy | 13 |
| 2. Hemingway, Hermann Hesse. | 11 |
| 3. A. Christie, Dostoïevski | 10 |
| 4. A.J. Conin, Simenon | 8 |
| 5. John Dickson Carr, Erle Stanley Gardner, Gide, Rilke, Steinbeck | 7 |
| **NETHERLANDS** | |
| 1. Bible | 10 |
| 2. Hans Andersen | 7 |
| 3. Upton Sinclair | 6 |
| **POLAND** | |
| 1. Lenin | 8 |
| 2. Jack London | 7 |
| 3. Hugo, Tolstoy | 6 |
| 4. Balzac, Ehrenbourg, Howard Fast, Gœthe, Turgenev | 4 |
| **PORTUGAL** | |
| 1. Shakespeare | 14 |
| 2. Delly, C. de Santander, Mme de Ségur | 7 |
| **SPAIN** | |
| 1. Emilio Salgari | 15 |
| 2. Simenon | 13 |
| 3. Jules Verne | 9 |
| 4. Dickens, Zane Grey | 8 |
| 5. Grimm, Edgar Allen Poe | 7 |
| **SWEDEN** | |
| 1. Edward S. Ellis | 18 |
| 2. Enid Blyton, Peter Cheyney, José Mallorqui, Paul Zilsö | 11 |
| **UNITED KINGDOM** | |
| 1. Bible | 6 |
| 2. Dumas (père) | 5 |
| 3. Hans Andersen, Simenon | 4 |
| 4. Dante, Dostoïevski, Thomas Mann, Alfred de Musset, Ovid, J. Spyri, Stalin | 3 |
| **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA** | |
| 1. Bible | 18 |
| 2. Simenon | 9 |
| 3. Dostoievski | 8 |
| 4. Dante | 7 |
| 5. St. Augustine | 7 |
| **U.S.S.R.** | |
| 1. Lenin | 328 |
| 2. Stalin | 126 |
| 3. Bulganin | 71 |
| 4. Gorki | 49 |
| 5. Krushchev | 40 |
| In field of literature top 5 authors are all Russian : | |
| 1. Gorki | 49 |
| 2. Pushkin | 35 |
| 3. Nosov | 27 |
| 4. Mayakowsky | 26 |
| 5. Tolstoy | 26 |
| *A large percentage of Soviet translation figures concerns Russian-language works published in the many languages of the U.S.S.R. and of translations of these languages into Russian.* | |
| Top 10 non-Russian authors | |
| 1. Jules Verne | 20 |
| 2. Theodore Dreiser | 17 |
| 3. Jack London | 15 |
| 4. Victor Hugo | 13 |
| 5. Balzac | 10 |
| 6. Mark Twain, H. Fast | 9 |
| 7. Daniel Defoe | 8 |
| 8. Hans Andersen | 7 |
| 9. Dickens, Dumas (père), Emilio Rodari | 6 |
| 10. Fenimore Cooper, A. Daudet, Zola, Romain Rolland | 5 |
| **YUGOSLAVIA** | |
| 1. Jules Verne | 7 |
| 2. Dumas (père), Grimm, Mark Twain | 6 |
| 3. Karl May, E.M. Remarque, Tolstoy | 5 |
| 4. Balzac | 4 |

## TOP TRANSLATING COUNTRIES IN 1955

| | TITLES |
|---|---|
| 1. U.S.S.R. | 4,282 |
| 2. Germany | 2,056 |
| 3. Czechoslovakia | 1,478 |
| 4. France | 1,424 |
| 5. Japan | 1,203 |
| 6. Italy | 1,118 |
| 7. Netherlands | 1,104 |
| 8. Poland | 1,071 |
| 9. Sweden | 949 |
| 10. Spain | 894 |
| 11. U.S.A. | 818 |
| 12. Yugoslavia | 738 |
| 13. U.K. | 659 |
| 14. Rumania | 658 |
| 15. Norway | 644 |

## INDEX OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

For years the Bible has occupied first place in lists of most frequently published books in translations. Figures for 1955 have changed the picture, and as shown in table on page 8, the Bible has dropped to second place behind Lenin. However, it is interesting to note that of the 371 translations of Lenin published in 14 countries during 1955, only 43 were produced outside the Soviet Union, the remaining 328 being translations published within the U.S.S.R. in languages other than Russian (see table above).

Tables on these pages are based on information collated from past eight years of UNESCO's *Index Translationum: International Bibliography of Translations* (price per volume: $14; 70/-; 3,500 francs). The *Index,* first started in 1932 by the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, then listed only six countries. UNESCO resumed publication of the *Index* in 1950 (none appeared between 1941-47) the first volume covering 8,000 translations in 26 countries for the year 1948. The latest Volume VIII covers a record 51 countries and lists 24,274 translations published in 1955.

The volumes of *Index Translationum* have been hailed as "a remarkable storehouse of contemporary history... a register of intellectual co-operation which richly repay people of very varying interests for whatever time they can devote to them." As one librarian recently wrote: "Their historical importance increases as every new annual volume is added to their ranks... It is unfortunate that many who would appreciate the information given in the annual volumes of the *Index Translationum* remain unaware of its existence... A glance at the well-printed pages reveals that the material here given in such prosaic fashion would provide a journalist with enough facts for half-a-dozen rousing articles, a sociologist with the basis for a searching study of current trends in tastes and interests, and a historian with more than sufficient material for almost any theory on contemporary problems he cared to elaborate."

A STROLL WITH IMMORTAL FRIENDS
*(Continued)*

# How many from the East?

in out of the way places, in the earth itself, hopeful of discovering, alongside the broken statues and columns, some fragments of great books lost to the world.

One of these collectors was Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, the Italian Renaissance philosopher. The son of a long line of navigators, he had sailed the Mediterranean from the age of ten. Now he made journeys to Spain and Southern Italy where his searches brought to light ancient manuscripts.

Down the centuries translators of genius have tackled the great works of the human mind and famous writers have counted it an honour to revive the writings of the ancients for their contemporaries. In the 16th century Jacques Amyot in France and Lope de Vega in Spain made masterly translations of Plutarch's *Lives*. In the following century the *Arabian Nights* were translated from the Arabic and thus Arab literature enriched that of the West. The fashion for translations reached such a pitch that to be sure of success, writers sometimes passed off their own works as translations that had been made from another tongue.

From all this it might be concluded that each country is well acquainted with the literature of others. This is, unhappily, not the case. A look through the volumes of *Index Translationum*, published by UNESCO each year, reveals the fact that no regular and balanced two-way flow of translations between different countries exists. While a surprisingly large number of translations may be made in one particular country, this does not mean that its own books enjoy the same popularity elsewhere.

The most striking example is that of Japan. This is one of the countries where people read most. Something like 16 million copies of daily newspapers are printed, and these have far more pages than those published in England or France.

According to statistics, 2,360 works were translated into Japanese from other languages in 1953-54 and 1,203 in 1955. Although this is a high figure, it is not exceptional when compared with those (for 1953-54 and for 1955) of several other countries: Germany (2,473 and 2,056); Italy (2,336 and 1,118); Yugoslavia (1,408 and 738); or France (2,674 and 1,424). It is rather in the choice of books that Japan's case becomes practically unique. The list of titles is really astounding. It gives the impression that no great writer, no leading thinker and no important poet has been overlooked by the translators.

Writers of every period and from every country seem to be covered. They offer a vast panorama of human culture, history, science, politics and poetry. All the great "super length" novels are there, old and new, and sometimes even those from Western literature scarcely known in the West because they happen to have been written in languages with a small diffusion. Poetry is well represented. We find the names of the greatest poets of ancient and modern times.

The general impression given is that the Japanese reader is well versed in every aspect of Western civilization —from Jean Paul Sartre to Agatha Christie, from philosophers and the polemics they inspire, and the successful first novel of an 18-year.old French girl student to the stir created by the latest thriller.

What has the West done to compare with this great coverage? All we find of translations from the Japanese in all countries is a mere handful of works, including two taken from the scenarios of two famous films—*Rashomon* and *The Gates of Hell*—and presented in that form. Germany has translated, and in an abridged form, the great Japanese novel, *Genji Monogatari*. Many Western publishers would say it was too long, yet the Japanese have translated the longest Western novels, including *A la Recherche du temps perdu, Les Thibault* and *Les Hommes de bonne volonté*, to name a few of the recent French ones.

Between 1928 and 1933 an English publisher brought out the first complete translation of the six-volume masterpiece of Japanese psychological literature under the alluring titles of *The Tale of Genji, The Sacred Tree, A Wreath of Cloud, Blue Trousers, The Lady of the Boat* and *The Bridge of Dreams*, the last two of which were later translated into Italian.

When this monumental translation appeared it was hailed as a great literary event in Western countries and the works enjoyed great success. An ambitious programme for making unabridged translations was prepared and launched in a number of Western countries, but this was unfortunately interrupted by the outbreak of war.

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Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus (St. Jerome) the first great translator of the Christian world. Drawing by Rembrandt.

Despite its small population, Israel, after Japan, is one of the countries with the broadest of tastes in literature. *Index Translationum* (N° 7) lists 1,070 translations for Israel. (N° 8, the latest *Index*, gives no figures). The list includes, for example, classical masterpieces in Persian and Arabic, and also those written in languages less widely used, such as Norwegian, Croat, Hungarian, Czech, modern Greek, Danish, Dutch and Turkish, and works in the languages most widely used: Spanish, Russian, French, German, English and Chinese.

There are, of course, many reasons why different countries are so unevenly represented in the field of translations. Those which use languages which have the widest diffusion perhaps tend to take the easiest course. In France, where 1,424 titles were recorded as having been translated in 1955 there was, leaving aside the great classical masterpieces, a great predominance of Anglo-Saxon literature. Then again, children in nearly every country read *Alice in Wonderland*, *Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales* and *Pinocchio* (I can still see the delightful Japanese illustrations of a very oriental-looking Pinocchio, with such a novel expression on his little wooden face).

In 1949 I met a publisher who was launching the first collection of world masterpieces, complete or abridged, in the Indonesian national language. I was idly turning the pages of the books, though not understanding a single word I saw. Suddenly I saw on one cover the black silhouette of a horseman against a distant background of tropical foliage where the arms of a windmill could be seen. He carried a lance and his knees gripped the flanks of a cadaverous horse. Don Quixote, the "knight of the woeful countenance" was beginning his wanderings in a new country.

I felt full of envy for the people in Indonesia who would get to know the greatest work of Spanish literature. For how many Indonesians, I wondered, would it serve as a doorway to Spain.And then it occurred to me that it was not only Spain they would get to know better through this masterpiece of writing. Through Don Quixote they would learn to know men everywhere a little better; through him they would better understand themselves, for the great unchanging features of mankind are revealed even more clearly in the world's literary masterpieces than in the outward characteristics of the countries which conceived them and brought them forth.

**PINOCCHIO,** Italian writer Carlo Collodi's famous story of a puppet, as published in England.

*IN WORLD TRANSLATION DERBY*

# Agatha Christie, Peter Cheyney Lead Cervantes Homer & Dante ❷

WHICH of the world's books enjoy the greatest popularity? In other words, apart from the literature of their own mother tongue, what do people like reading most? Do their tastes vary greatly? Do works from one country suddenly become popular in others or does literary popularity follow a regular pattern? Questions like these spring to one's mind on looking through *Index Translationum,* UNESCO's annual index of books which are translations from an original version into another language and which have been published during the previous year.

But to answer these questions with any degree of accuracy we have to exclude from our calculations those books which people read, not because they necessarily like them but because of a religious, educational, political or scientific need or duty.

Books on mathematics and grammar are certainly not favourites with children, yet in countries where compulsory education is really an established fact, almost as many such books are printed as there are children. The Bible, of which an enormous number of translations is made, is usually read as a religious duty and is often distributed free in the course of missionary work. Works of political doctrine, like those of Marx and Lenin, are constantly being reprinted in many countries to serve as textbooks for political instruction, and certain important scientific works are translated into many languages, often because no exactly equivalent works exist, and they are therefore indispensable.

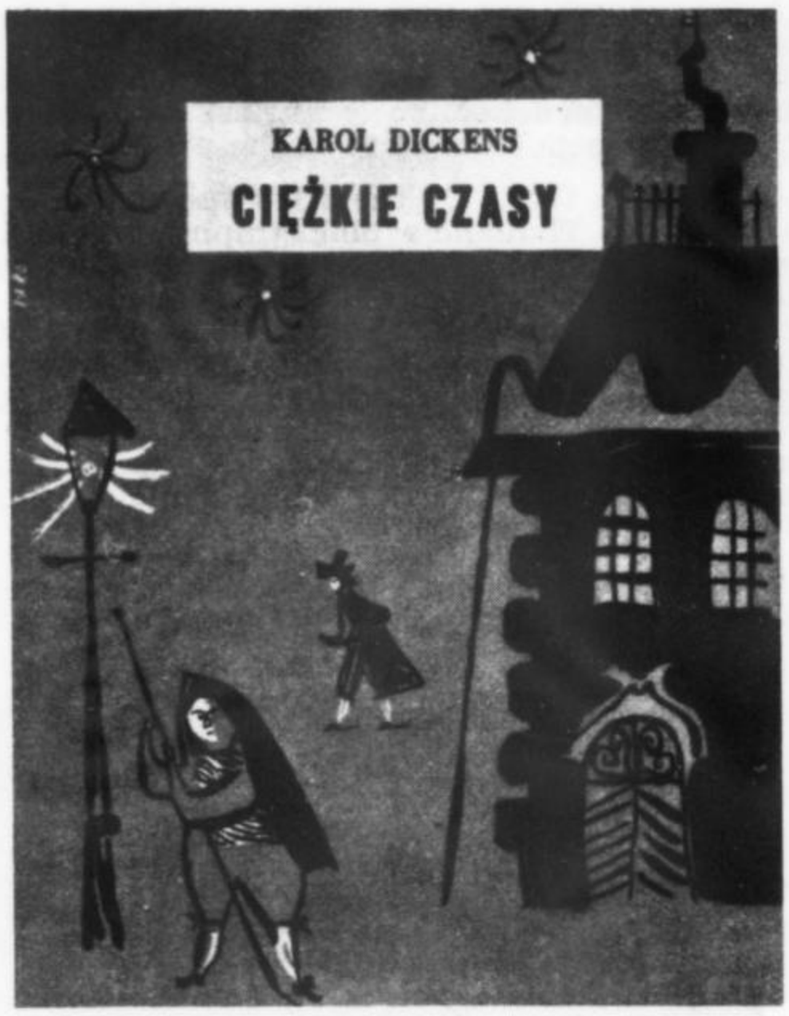
We shall find the answers to our questions, therefore, by considering the books which the main libraries of the world classify, according to the Universal Decimal Classification system, under the number 8. In libraries around the globe, from the Library of Congress at Washington to the National Libraries in Paris and Tokyo, the number 8 is applied to all books classified as "literature"—all those works which men down the ages have written for their own enjoyment, or because of something they wished to forget or other men to remember, or out of a desire to place on record (both for themselves and for others) their enthusiasms and convictions, their hatred and despair, their emotions and hopes, or simply the stories they spun to while away the time.

Thanks to UNESCO's comprehensive comparative studies of translations throughout the world presented in *Index Translationum* and in *Book Production 1937-1954 and Translation 1950-1954*, we can find our way through the maze of literary translation without giving to certain figures (accurate in themselves), an absolute value to which they are certainly not entitled.

In 1954, for example, the U.S.S.R. reported its translations (actually spread over a number of years) as 776. Now this figure does not have the same meaning it would have if given by, say, France, Germany or any other country where one principal language is spoken and read by practically the entire population. Owing to the large number of languages in the U.S.S.R. 328 of the total of 776 translations made were from Russian into other languages of the Soviet Union, which thus reduces the number of translations of works coming from outside the U.S.S.R. to 448.

Another unusual case is found in Greece where of 358 translations in 1955, 260 were "literary." Out of these,

**BABBITT,** a satire on the average businessman by Sinclair Lewis, as it appears in a Polish edition.




**HARD TIMES** a novel written by Charles Dickens in 1854, as it appeared when published in Polish.

49 were translations from classical Greek, a much higher proportion than in any other country. The people of Greece, understandably enough, never tire of the great masterpieces of a past that is still very much alive. In France, during the same year, 1,452 books were translated, including 861 works of literature.

In drawing a balanced and accurate picture of the world's literature translations several other factors must be taken into account. A distinction must be made between first or original translations and re-issues of translations. These figures, however, are difficult to pick out from literary production as a whole—though easily identified in the case of recent works, they are almost unobtainable for the older books.

Again, in the case of these older works, a number of translations may have been made in the same language. Generally speaking, books whose authors have died too recently for the copyright to have lapsed on their works can only be translated and published in each country by one publisher who has acquired the exclusive rights. But once the copyright has lapsed, translations of the book can follow each other thick and fast in every country where it is read, and may sometimes appear simultaneously. Thus in Italy, for example, ten publishers may bring out their own translations of a Shakespearean tragedy at the same time, whereas a novel by the great German writer Thomas Mann, who died only a few years ago, can only be translated by one publisher who has exclusive rights over the work for fifty years.

And the final rule in this game of discovering which authors' books are the most widely read is to consider the figures for any one year in relation to those for preceding years. Sometimes the popularity of an author whose works have been re-issued regularly year after year suddenly seems to be on the wane. Is he being less widely read? Not necessarily so, and, in fact, the contrary is sometimes the case. What has happened is that publishers, counting on large sales, have printed big editions to cut down overhead costs. Thus the market is temporarily saturated and no new editions need be published for the time being.

If we were to think of the translation of the world's great literary masterpieces in terms of a horse or motor racing contest, with each new language covered representing an obstacle overcome, who would be the winners in 1955?

Heading the field, both by the number of works translated and the variety of languages in which he continues his steady course, comes Leo Tolstoy, a true giant amongst writers. Since 1948 he has been at the head of the leading group, and in 1955 no writer or poet, past or present, can compete with the author of *War and Peace*. Translated in 23 countries and read all over the world, from Japan to Brazil by way of India and Indonesia, his works, complete or abridged, are always to be found.

Following Tolstoy and running neck and neck (in the language of the turf) are two authors translated in 22 countries—the creator of angelic beings and of monsters, William Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of the modern world, and Hans Christian Andersen, the father of the little mermaid and the ugly duckling, for whom so many adults have retained their childhood affection.

Just behind these two comes a group of four made up of two Russians, a Frenchman and an American: Maxim Gorki, Anton Chekov, Honoré de Balzac and Jack London. In 1955 each of them was translated in 19 countries. Of the four, however, Chekov appears to have made the most progress since the Second World War and to have had the greatest number of new works translated.

Two more Russians, Dostoievski and Turgenev follow close behind, along with Charles Dickens and Alexandre Dumas, all of them having translations in 18 countries. They are all familiar figures among the leaders in this annual contest for it is many years since *The Brothers Karamazov, David Copperfield* and *Fathers and Sons* first journeyed forth from their own countries. As to *The Three Musketeers,* the fame of their swashbuckling adventures has long since spread to Africa, Asia and the Americas.

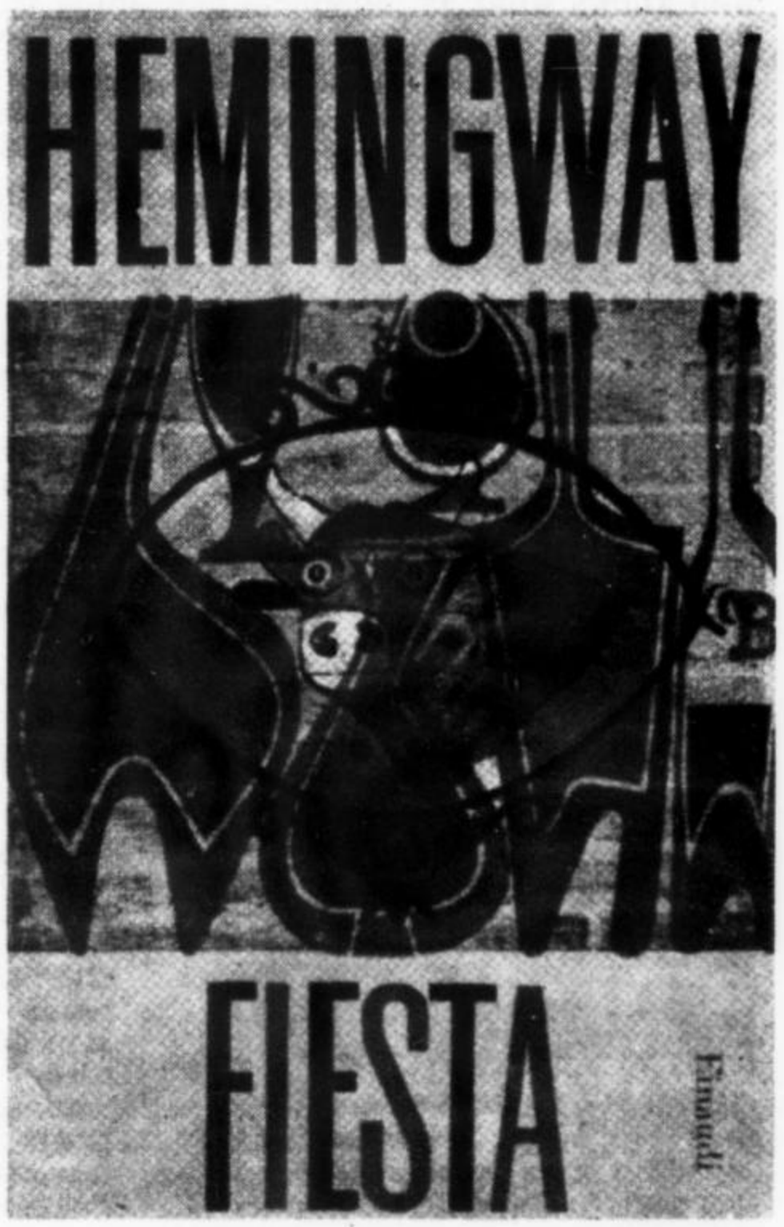
Here comes the first woman contestant: Pearl Buck, an American, alongside a fabulous poet and storyteller, Pushkin, both of them having translations in 17 countries. Following them is a compact group of eight: Jules Verne, Mark Twain, Guy de Maupassant, Plato, Victor Hugo, Emile Zola, Somerset Maugham, and Daphne du Maurier (16 countries).

But why continue to place the arrivals? Anyone picking up the *Index Translationum* for 1955, which will shortly be published, can make scores of interesting and amusing discoveries like these. A few more, however, are worth mentioning here: Aristophanes and the Brothers Grimm have been translated in 14 countries, Fenimore Cooper in 13, Goethe and Cervantes in 12, and Homer, Dante and Cervantes in 11 countries.

Cont'd on next page

Yet the number of translations is no yardstick of genius and it would be absurd to draw

**THE SUN ALSO RISES,** Hemingway's novel of a "lost generation" became "Fiesta" in its Italian version.



# WORLD TRANSLATION DERBY

*(Continued)*

from the statistics which seem to show Dante, Homer and Cervantes as losers, other conclusions than the proper ones. So let us look at some different figures, and, keeping in mind that this is still a sort of game, since genius again cannot be measured by the number of works it produces, let us see how many works of the 1955 winners were published during the year in the countries where their translations were made.

Tolstoy still leads with 105 titles, Gorki follows with 102 and the unforgettable Jules Verne, despite the extraordinary scientific discoveries since his time, holds third place with 92. Shakespeare boasts 74 titles (*Julius Caesar* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* by the way, recently appeared for the first time in the Indonesian language), then Hans Andersen with 71, followed by Chekov, 66; Dostoievski, 62; and Pushkin, 61.

Ninth in the list comes Jack London, the friend of outlaws, icy wastes and wild beasts, with 55 titles, then Mark Twain (52) in tenth place, followed by Balzac (50) and Dumas (49). Several authors tie for the following places: Plato and Turgenev (13th with 41 each); de Maupassant and Somerset Maugham (40) and Victor Hugo and Zola (37). Leaders among the women authors are Pearl Buck with 32 and Daphne du Maurier (21). There is certainly no question about it, the Russians are the undoubted champions of the "translation Derby".

As our look into the world of translations has shown us, one type of literature which holds a leading place and which has for long left its imprint on grown-ups and young people alike, is the adventure story. It has many variations—from cloak and dagger plots to exploits in far-off lands, from flashbacks to the days of chivalry to forward-looking accounts of life in future times.

Its heroes seem to combine both the qualities and roles of law-enforcers and bandits, those romantic outlaws to whom the continuing vogue of "westerns" appears to be giving a permanent lease of life. The adventures nearly always take place in some exotic setting—the frozen wastes of the Far North, the virgin forest, the parched desert, the forgotten island, unless it happens to be... the Moon. These kinds of books are firmly entrenched in public taste, and who knows what astronomical publishing figures may one day be credited to the latest conqueror, Davy Crockett.

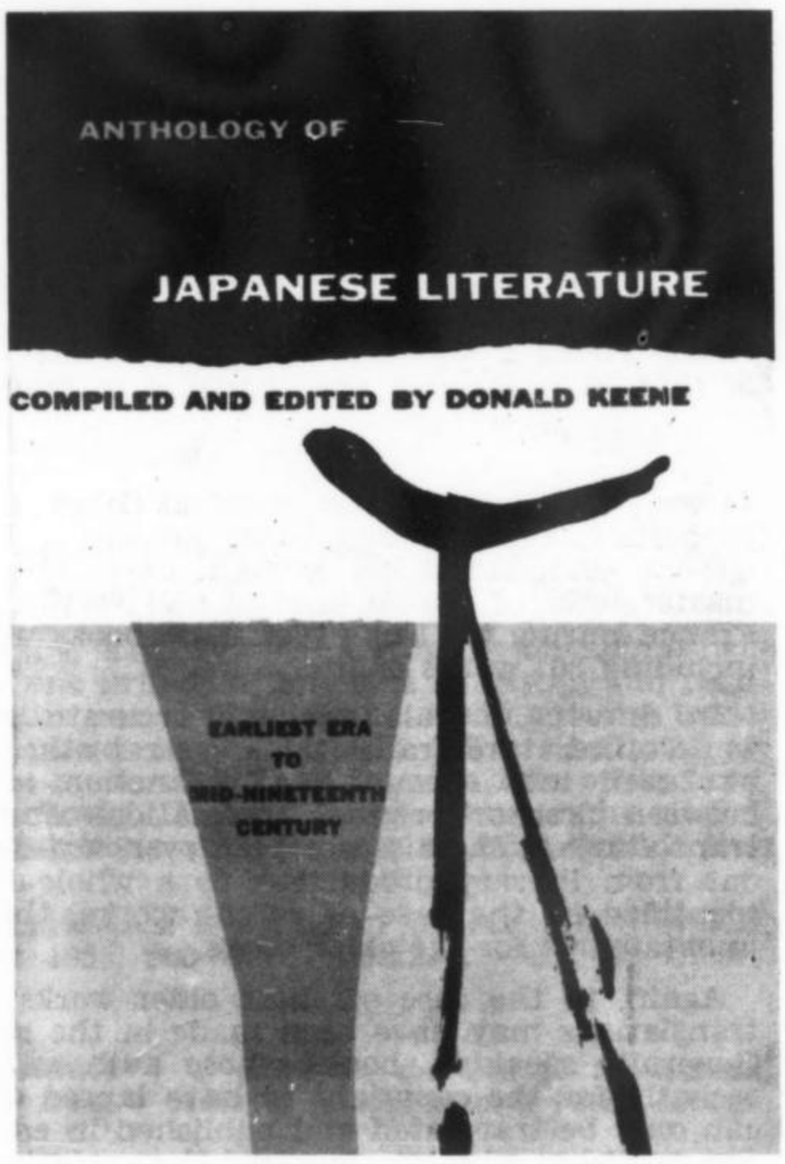
Now a newcomer has joined the school of Jack London, Oliver Curwood, and Fenimore Cooper—José Mallorqui, a writer who has taken the Spanish-speaking world by storm, and whose *Prairie Wolf* adventure series is now also being widely translated in four northern European countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden).

**GERMAN VERSION** of last published work by H. G. Wells, *Mind at the End of its Tether.* (This was published in Zurich, Switzerland)

Another type of book, whose leading producers are translated more widely than Dante, Cervantes or Sophocles, is now challenging the supremacy of the adventure stories. This is the detective novel which one half of the reading public prefers not to regard as literature, but which the other half often reads to the exclusion of all else. Its once undisputed leading exponents, Conan Doyle (translated in eight languages in 1955) and Simenon (12 languages) are now being outstripped by others: Agatha Christie (translated in 13 countries; ten different titles in Japan alone and three in Spain) and Peter Cheyney (translated in nine countries) to mention only two of the most popular writers at the present time.

Here is a significant fact. Of the six titles of literary translations given in Thailand's bibliography for 1955, three are detective novels of the Sherlock Holmes series by Conan Doyle. The "thriller's" world-wide success inspired us to carry out a little research into the fate of two of its pathfinders, Eugène Sue and Ponson de Terrail. They were among the most widely translated authors of the 19th century and had many devotees—and imitators. Brazil, Norway, Portugal and Yugoslavia, we found, were still translating Ponson de Terrail while Finland and Norway still read Eugène Sue.

Do films have any influence on translations? A great deal, according to booksellers who find sales of great books increasing whenever they are made into successful films. Does this mean that the best literary works will have to depend on cinema box office successes to find admirers? Will Cinemascope encourage reading? In view of the many great works now being adapted for the cinema we should soon know the answer.




**TRANSLATION OF GREAT WORKS** into languages of wider diffusion has been a Unesco activity since 1948. So far translations into five languages—Arabic, English, French, Persian and Spanish—have either been published or are in preparation. Thirty volumes have already appeared and 70 others are under preparation (altogether they will cover 25 literatures). Above, book jacket of the Anthology of Japanese Literature in the Japanese series of Unesco's Collection of Representative Works. The Unesco Courier will devote part of a forthcoming issue to this Collection.

Finally, we think it is worth while to list all the authors given under the "Literature" column of the bibliography for Iran, whose works were translated in 1955. The list is quite short: Honoré de Balzac (*Le Père Goriot*); Joseph Bédier (*Le Roman de Tristan et Yseult*); Edward Brown (*A Literary History of Persia*); Alphonse Daudet (*Les Femmes d'Artistes*); Nicholas Gogol (*Tarass Bulba*); Nathaniel Hawthorne (*The Scarlet Letter*); Victor Hugo (*Quatrevingt-treize* and *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*); and Friedrich Schiller (*Wilhelm Tell*). Eight names in all: four Frenchmen, one German, one American, one Englishman and one Russian.

# TIDBITS, ECCENTRICA AND OTHER MORSELS

### Curious garb

Books have been bound in all manner of shoddy and rich fabrics, from bandana cotton and burlap sacking to silk brocade and Venice velvet, from homespun to satin and from canvas to tapestry. Their covers have been graced by even more precious stuffs, studded with jewels and inlaid with ivory, enamels, filigree silver and mosaic leathers. Even royal raiment has been used. Several books in England were covered with silk material from the waistcoats of King Charles I. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

### Stenographic versions

Abbreviated writing dates back to the earliest efforts at recording in ancient Egypt. Among early Christians, St. Augustine and St. Jerome employed a corps of stenographers. Between 1600 and 1750 more than 200 shorthand systems were published. Today renditions of literary works exist in more than fifty recognized shorthand systems the world over. Among these works the Bible takes leading place. Samuel Pepys' unique picture of Restoration England was written in shorthand in the diary he kept between 1660 and 1669. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

### French favourites

According to a 1955 survey the French read more books than the

Americans or the English and prefer novels more than any other kind of literature (72% of women and 51% of men). Classics are as popular as modern works and tastes differ only slightly between old and young people. Fifty-three per cent of readers like both foreign and French books, 31% prefer French authors and 16% like foreign ones. (French Institute of Public Opinion)

### Picture parade

Colour films based on the best contemporary children's picture books have been attracting much interest from publishers, educators, librarians and psychologists in the United States. The films, available for TV programmes or for schools, libraries

and other institutions, aim to transfer the book's dramatic and artistic qualities directly from the printed page to the screen. Picture and text remain virtually unaltered, the camera exploring the movement created by the artist in his illustrations, to the accompaniment of the spoken text and a specially written musical score. (UNESCO)

### Miniature marvel

Earliest in age among tiny books is the *Offices of the Blessed Virgin* printed by Nicholas Jenson at Venice, in 1475. Although this great typographer produced many a larger volume, none was more lovely than this one, which has been called "a miniature epitome of the whole art of bookmaking". Ornamented with

three borders and many richly illuminated letters, it was only two and a quarter inches tall. It was printed on vellum in red and black, with twelve lines to the page, the morocco sides richly tooled and painted. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

### 25 million new readers

Each year 25 million more people, many of them adults, learn to read. Present total of literate persons is about one thousand three hundred million, or half the world's population. The proportion of regular book readers varies according to countries. In Western countries it is estimated—despite counter attractions of the cinema, radio and TV—at around 60%. (UNESCO)

### Eighty miles of books

No one knows the exact number of books in the library of the British Museum, London, but it is believed that there are about five million in the sixty miles of shelves. A comprehensive cataloguing was begun in 1931, but after 23 years, experts realised that it would take another 82 years to finish the catalogue. At the present tempo of work the complete catalogue will be ready in the year 2036, and will run to 200 volumes. By that time the museum bookshelves will have a total length of 80 miles. (UNESCO)

### Goliaths of bookdom

Up the River Nile at Thebes, on two massive walls of the second pylon of the main temple of Rameses III, is chiseled the largest "book" in all the world. Its "pages" are 138 feet wide. This ancient chronicle of triumph has defied obliteration and oblivion for more than 3,000 years. One of the legendary giants of bookdom is the Great Koran of the Samarkand

Palace courtyard, made about 1403. The book has disappeared but its size is suggested by the surviving stone lectern on which it is said to have rested. This measures seven and a half feet by six and a half feet. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

### Shakespeare in Esperanto

Many great literary works have been put into Esperanto. *Hamlet* (Hamleto) was translated by Ludwig Zamenhof, the Polish inventor of Esperanto. Other translated Shakespearean plays include *King Lear* (La Rego Lear). *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Songo de Someromeza Nokto), and the *Merchant of Venice* (La

Venecia Komercisto). Not only the Bible, but the Psalms separately are published in Esperanto. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

### Trust in books

A National Book Trust is being created by the Government of India to encourage production of good literature and make books available at moderate prices to libra-

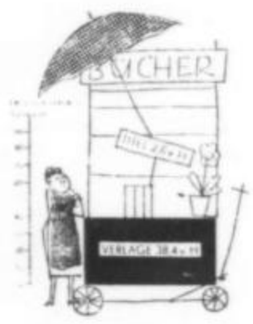
Cont'd on next page

# TIDBITS *(Continued)*

ries, educational institutions and the public. Besides the classical literature of India and books on Indian art, the Trust will be responsible for publishing translations of important works in foreign languages, and will arrange for the translation of books from one Indian language into another. (UNESCO)

## Workers' playtime

One day last year, workers in a Tennessee (U.S.) factory found that illustrated story books had been placed near their rest rooms. A sign above said: "Take one home to read to your children. They will have a good time and so will you." All the




books have since been borrowed and read in turn by scores of families. One man commented: "If I'd had books like these when I was a child perhaps I would have taken to reading and made more of myself". The experiment is now being extended to other factories. (UNESCO)

## An idea for others

To overcome difficulties Norwegian authors meet in getting their books translated and published in other countries, Norway has launched a scheme under which specimen works of fiction are translated into English for submission to foreign publishers. Because foreign publishers' readers "hardly ever know any of the Scandinavian languages" says the Norwegian Authors' Association, "books by these authors are filed away without even being opened". Thus, until now choice of books for translation has been arbitrary and has not truly reflected the trends of modern Norwegian literature. (UNESCO)

## Recipe for wisdom

It is said in China that there are seven essential occupations for the cultured person: books, chess, music, painting, poetry, wine and flowers. Towards books there are two general attitudes. The first is respect for the printed word. Thus a person can usually win an argument or dominate a discussion by citing a passage from a well-known book, as for example, the Confucian classics. The second attitude is one of reasonable scepticism, well summed up by Mencius,

who is quoted as saying: "If you believed entirely in books, it were better to have no books at all." (UNESCO)

## Kingdom for a book

Joao de Barros, a 16th century Portuguese historian and author, wrote a work entitled *Cronica do Emperador Clarimundo* in 1522 and dedicated it to King Joao III of Portugal. He received as royal recompense the entire province of Maranhao (part of Brazil) covering 177,000 square miles, or about the size of France. This book and another by de Barros, a *History of Asia,* inspired the Portuguese poet Camoens to compose *Os Lusiadas*—one of the world's great literary works. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

## Multi-millionaires

The world's great libraries with collections of one million or more books include: The British Museum (5,000,000); Library of Congress, Washington (10,000,000); Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (approx. 6 million); Offentlich Wissenschafftliche Bibliotek, Berlin (2.9 million); National-

bibliotek, Vienna (1.5 million); Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels (2 million); National Diet, Tokyo (3,5 million); New York Public Library (6 million); Lenin State Library, Moscow (reported to contain 15 million volumes); Public Library, Leningrad (about 10 million volumes); U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Library (8 millions). (UNESCO)

## One-book library

Two remarkable library contrasts: As of June 30, 1954, the Library of Congress in Washington had 10,155,307 books and pamphlets, and 14,282,594 manuscripts, letters and written documents. In India there is a library that holds only one book. Built at Amritsar of costly marble, copper and gold leaf, it enshrines the holy book of the Sikhs. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

## Verbosity in verse

The Bodleian Library in Oxford, England, possesses the longest occidental poem ever written—more than 68,000 lines. Written in 1610 by Robert Barret, and entitled: *The Sacred War, an History conteyning the Christian Conquest of the Holy Land from* 568 *till* 1588*: Reduced into a Poem Epike,* it treated the Crusades in rhymed quatrains. Other bards pale beside such sustained poetic flight: Homer's *Iliad* (15,773 lines) and *Odyssey* (12,107); Dante's *Divine Comedy* (14,533); Milton's *Paradise Lost* (10,565).

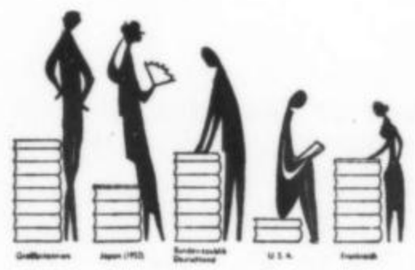
Longest sentence in the English language was written in 1675 by Edward Phillips in his *Preface to Theatrum Poetarum.* An elaborate weave of clauses, it runs to a total of 1.012 words. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

## Books from the U.S.A.

According to the new American monthly publication, "Books from the U.S.A.", about 10,000 new books and 2,500 new editions were published in the U.S.A. during 1955. Of these, works of fiction lead with 2,073 followed by juvenile books with 1,485, religious works (849), biographies (833) and science books (801). Fewest books were published on agriculture and gardening (168), philology (168) and music (103).

## Continental model

When a public library was opened in Medellin, Colombia, in 1954, it created quite a stir. It was not only



the city's first public library, but also the first in Colombia and one of the few in the whole of Latin America. It was set up as a pilot project by the Colombian Government and UNESCO, to encourage similar developments elsewhere in Latin America. During 1956 it had 285,000 visitors

Cont'd on page 33

Istituto di Patologia del Libro photos

*Story of Rome's Book Hospital*

# SAVED FROM FIRE & WATER

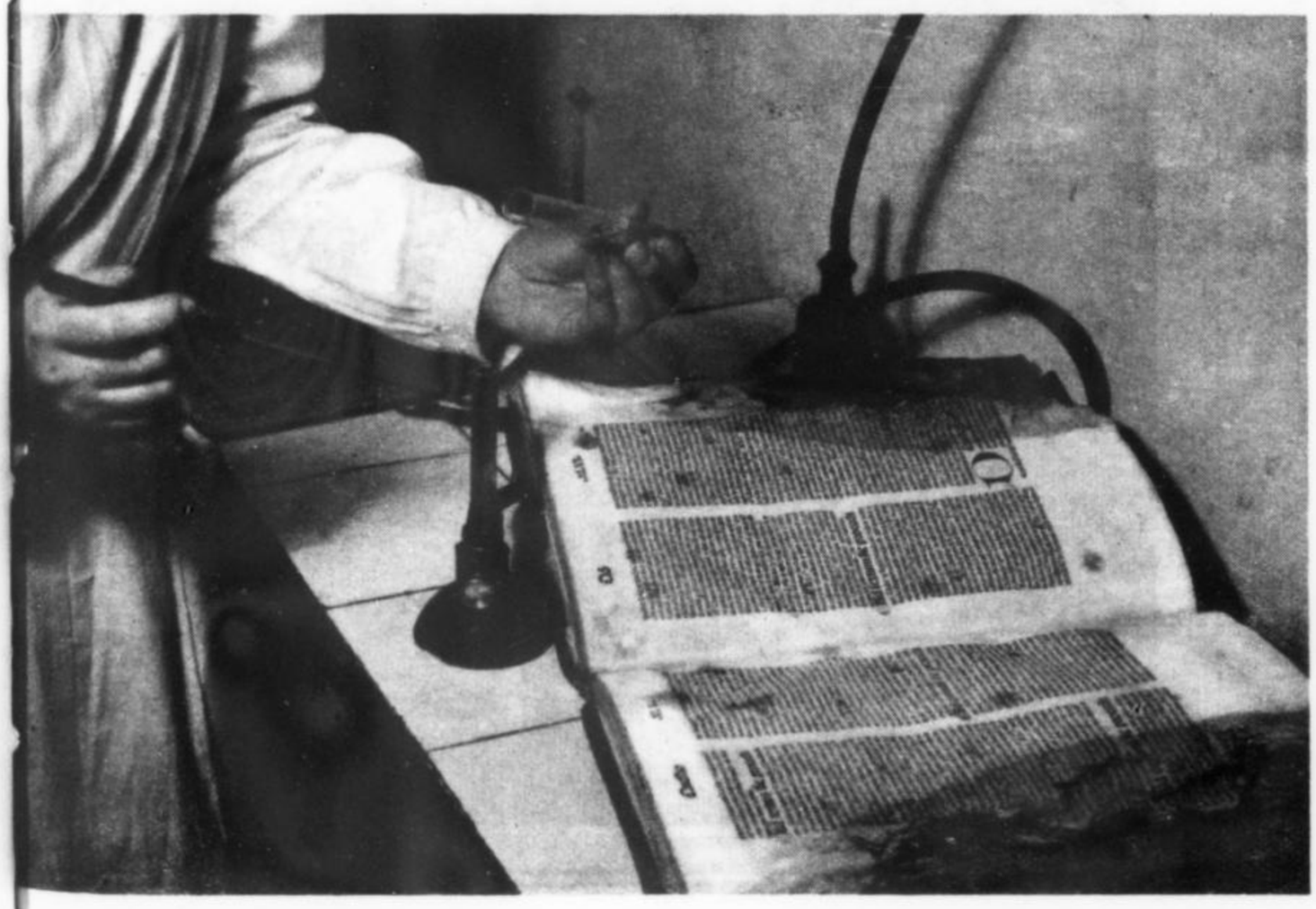
SCROLLS from the ashes of Pompeii, ancient Egyptian papyri, Indian tablets, books and manuscripts from every country and every century —all rest side by side in a remarkable institution in the heart of Rome, almost unknown to the general public.

The scrolls and books all have one thing in common. They have been victims of a variety of afflictions. They have survived fire, floods, bullets, bombs, chemical attack, destructive insects or just plain old age. Their rescuers: a group of scientists in Rome's unique "Book Hospital" (officially the Institute of Book Pathology) headed by Professor Giovanni Muzzioli.

On display at the "hospital's" museum are parchments burned to a crisp, volumes buried for years in the sea, books attacked by mould or eaten away by tiny insects. One heap of documents, reduced to a mass of pulp, was recovered from a sunken submarine; others were plucked from blazing buildings. Restoring these objects seemed almost impossible but the Book Hospital took on the job and in each case succeeded.

Books are the prey not only of external factors such as insects, mould or fire. Some ancient books were doomed from the day they were printed. Thus in Sicily long ago, book publishers and paper makers were proud of the beautiful volumes they produced on what they thought was top-quality paper. What they didn't know was that the paper was manufactured with water which came from a stream extremely rich in copper. The copper penetrated the paper, and with time all the pages turned black and brittle. The Book Hospital has devised a chemical treatment which whitens the paper and revives paper texture.

**INSECT VANDALS** which have feasted on the pages of valuable books get short shrift in "gas chamber" of Rome's Institute of Book Pathology. Protected by respirator, a specialist (above) carries out book disinfection. This book hospital has a microbiological laboratory entirely devoted to the study of bacteria and mould damage. Below, taking a sample of micro-organisms from a damaged book. Studies of these organisms will establish the exact reasons for the damage, will help scientists to devise methods of protection and restoration.



Many old books were once printed with inks containing acids which slowly destroyed the pages. The process can now be arrested by the use of chemical baths which have the effect of neutralizing the acid.

In one room of the Book Hospital museum stands an apparatus invented by Antonio Piaggio in 1773 which can accomplish the apparently impossible task of restoring a book which has been completely burned. The pages, reduced to curled ashes, are flattened piece by piece and reinforced with silk threads.

Cont'd on next page

# SAVED FROM FIRE & WATER

*(Continued)*

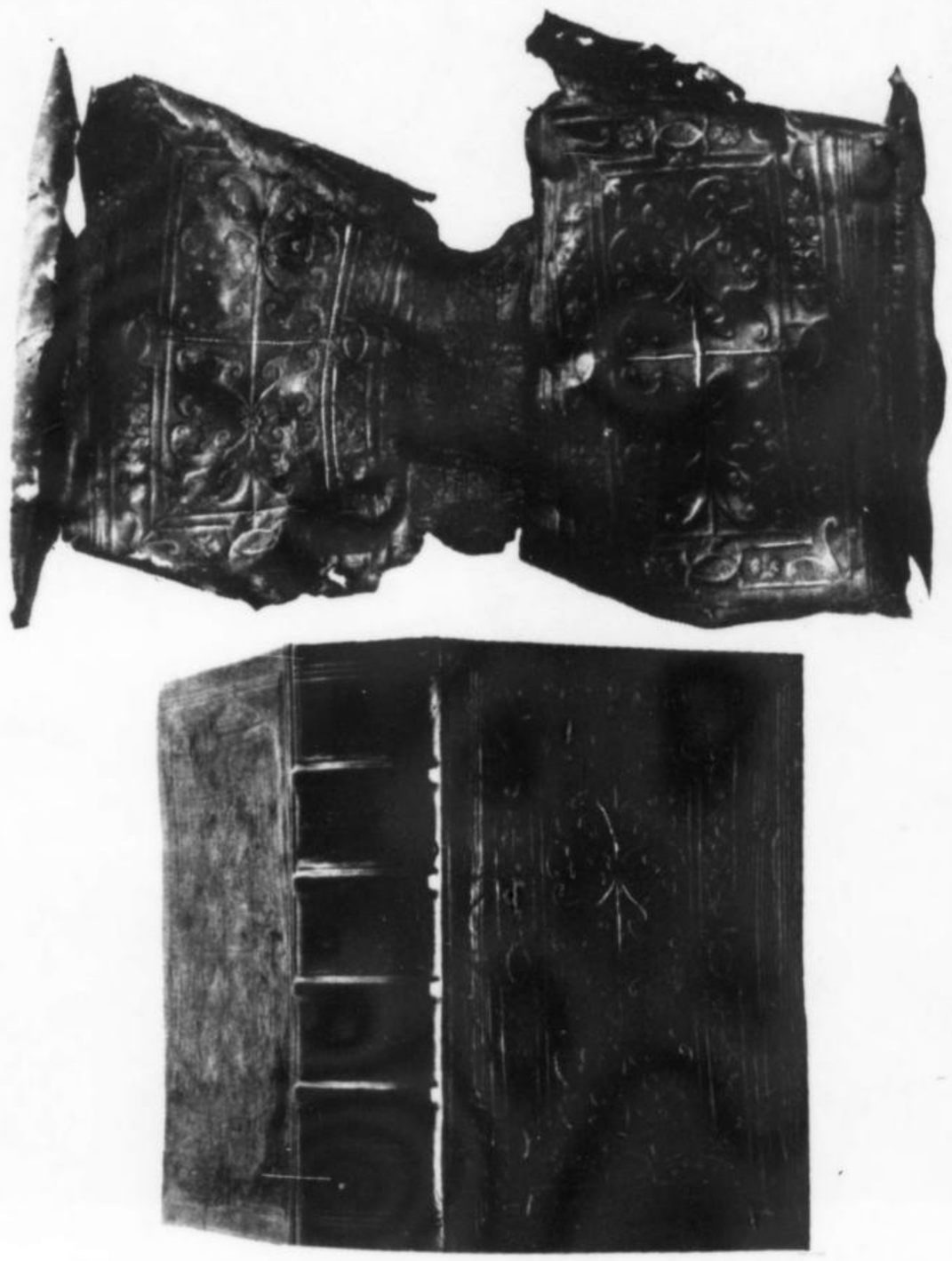
This work, requiring inexhaustible patience, has given astonishing results. In Italy, where the loss of priceless documents by fire has not been an infrequent occurrence, the work is considered of the utmost importance. In 1904, fire destroyed the Library of Turin; in 1908 it gutted the University Library of Messina; and during the two world wars losses were particularly heavy. Thousands of volumes were burned or cut to pieces by shrapnel during the last war alone, among them treasures from the National Library of Naples and the archives of Monte Cassino monastery which were reduced to rubble. Many of these incalculable treasures, transformed into shapeless tatters, have now been rescued and restored by the Book Hospital.

Most of the delicate work is carried out in the Institute's special laboratories. Here craftsmen unsew the pages from their ancient bindings, place them in separate frames and slide them carefully into chemical solutions for bleaching and whitening. Other chemical baths give the paper new life and flexibility. Torn pages are carefully pasted together and covered with a clear varnish. Every chemical or other type of material used is specially prepared according to the nature and state of the object treated. When required, damaged pages are consolidated with a piece of gossamer-thin silk fabric. After each part of the book has received appropriate treatment all the elements are re-assembled, re-sewn and rebound, the bindings too having been carefully repaired.

Often, a particularly fragile specimen is photographed. The original document is then carefully stored to protect it from further deterioration and full-sized replicas or microfilm reproductions made available for consultation. The Institute possesses a highly specialized photo laboratory equipped to bring out faded or vanished writing, reveal ancient texts overlaid by others on parchments, or verify the authenticity of seals and stamps on books and documents.

A microbiological laboratory is entirely reserved for the study of the depradations caused by bacteria and mould, another to that of insect damage. Chemical and physical laboratories study paper resistance, and tensile strength, paper bleaching and washing, and are continually analyzing and experimenting with various printing inks.

The Institute of Book Pathology possesses a library containing an important collection of specialized books on the graphic arts, paper (some manuscripts date back to the 13th century), and on the art of preserving and "healing" documents. It publishes a regular information bulletin describing experiments in process and research carried out both at the Institute and other centres.

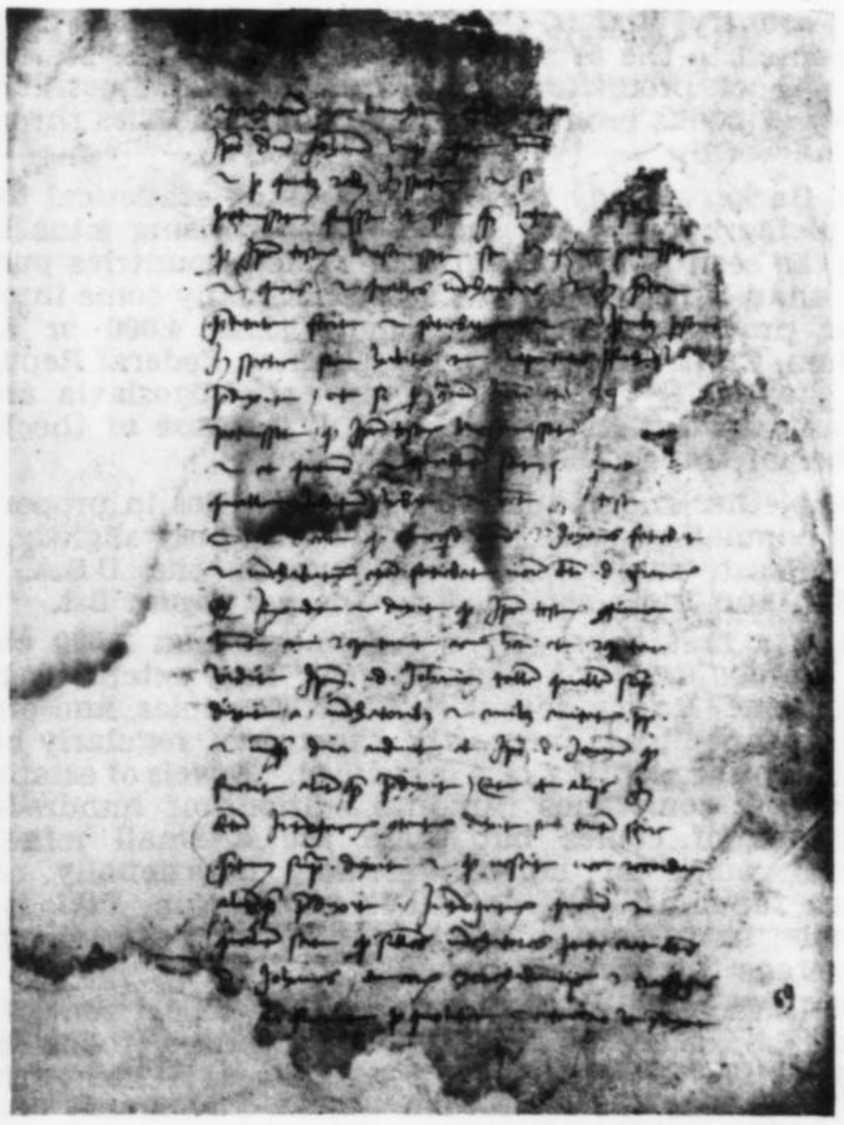


**BOOK SURGEONS** in Rome Institute accomplish some seemingly i of res They can transform a torn and warped piece of leather into a handsome ), exa appeared when new. Under delicate treatment, the charred and tatt burn

Istituto di Patologia del Libro photos

ngly in of restoration.
some), exactly as it
d tatte burned book.

once again become legible (below, right). Even a document completely blacked out by long immersion in sea water can be restored to some semblance of its former self (below, left). Many valuable volumes reduced to tatters during the last war have been restored by the Rome Book Hospital.



# WORLD PRODUCTION: 5,000 MILLION BOOKS A YEAR

UPWARDS of five thousand million copies of books are produced annually throughout the world, but large as this figure seems it represents only two books per person per year. About three-quarters of all books published come from ten countries, and half of all our books are used in schools while a large part of the remainder are housed in public or institutional libraries.

These striking facts come from a new UNESCO publication *Books for All* by R.E. Barker, deputy secretary of the Publishers' Association of Great Britain, who was commissioned by UNESCO to survey problems confronting the international book trade.

A dearth of printing and publishing facilities in large areas of the world, coupled with a maze of obstacles at national frontiers impedes the full production and free circulation of books. The difficulties range from tariff and currency restrictions to inadequate copyright protection, from a paucity of translation services to high transport costs.

The UNESCO survey reveals that statistics normally provided rarely show the actual output of books in any given country, that is, the total number of copies printed, as opposed to the total number of "titles"—the statistical unit of book production. Titles do however illustrate the variety of books produced in individual countries throughout the world.

Mr. Barker's study is laced with many statistical tables and pictographs which show some surprising situations: Thus, as seen in table (right), very few countries publish more than 10,000 titles a year and not many come into the major producer group with more than 4,000 or 5,000. Belgium, China, Czechoslovakia, German Federal Republic, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland and Yugoslavia are to be found in this high range mainly because of the large number of translations they publish.

The Netherlands publishes the most titles in proportion to its population, with tiny Switzerland only slightly less. In contrast, major producers such as the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and India come low on the *per capita* list.

Many a first novel never sells more than 2,500 copies even in countries of high literacy and extensive book production. Rarely does it exceed 5,000 copies, and only a foolhardy publisher incurs the expense of regularly binding the entire printing of a first novel. Novels of established authors sometimes run into editions of hundreds of thousands of copies but these are a small minority. General works of non-fiction may occasionally reach almost fabulous editions (Heyerdahl's *Kon Tiki* is an example; for others see U.S. best sellers on page 34) but on an average the number is small.

The UNESCO survey reveals that nearly 22 per cent of the world's books are in the English language, followed by Russian (17%), German (15%), Japanese (12%), French (10%), Spanish (7.5%), Italian (6.7%), Portuguese (5.4%), and Chinese (4.8%).

The United Kingdom is the world's largest book exporter. The U.S.A. is second, France third, Netherlands fourth, German Federal Republic fifth, Spain sixth, and Switzerland seventh. In only 12 cases does the value of international book exchange exceed $2 million. U.S. exports to Canada are by far the largest in the world to a single country, being three times greater than the nearest "rival"—the U.K.'s exports to Australia. Other important exports: U.K. to the United States, South Africa, Canada, New Zealand and India, in that order; U.S. exports to the Philippines and the U.K.; French exports to the Benelux countries; Netherlands exports to Indonesia and Benelux; German exports to Switzerland and Austria, and Swiss exports to Germany. Spanish exports to Argentina are not far behind.

One of the most striking postwar developments has been the rapid expansion of the German book trade. It has already gone far towards regaining its pre-war eminence. The Swiss book trade, which gained international prominence after the rise of Nazism in Germany, seems not to have suffered by this post-war German expansion. In fact, the German-speaking countries import more of each other's books each year just as the French and English-speaking countries do.

In Spanish America, only Mexico, Argentina, Chile, are considerable book producers. They export in quantity to most other Latin-American countries as well as to Spain and the U.S.A. Norway, Sweden and Denmark export regularly to each other, publication in other Scandinavian languages being a common feature of their book trade.

While the volume of the international book trade is considerable, there is comparatively little movement towards those economically underdeveloped countries where books are most needed. Much of present world trade in books follows traditional channels. With current advances in book production, translation and transport new channels could be developed which could bring the heritage of the world's literature to vast new audiences.

The crux of the problem of providing reading material for the underdeveloped nations was clearly stated by a committee of educational specialists convened by UNESCO

**Gian**

| Country | Total number of titles | Number of first editions |
|---|---|---|
| U.S.S.R. | 54 732 (1) | ? |
| Japan | 21 653 | 13 042 |
| United Kingdom | 19 962 | 14 192 |
| German Fed. Republic | 15 837 | 12 701 |
| U.S.A. | 12 589 (2) | 10 226 |
| France | 11 793 | ? |
| Italy | 9 320 | ? |
| Netherlands | 7 353 | 4 260 |
| Poland | 7 199 | 5 823 |
| Thailand | 5 475 | ? |
| German Democratic Republic | 5 359 | ? |
| Yugoslavia | 5 105 | 4 659 |
| Spain | 4 812 | ? |
| Sweden | 4 756 | 3 912 |
| Portugal | 4 754 | 4 472 |
| Czechoslovakia | 4 399 | ? |
| Belgium | 4 212 | 3 706 |

This table includes all countries which published more than 4,000 titles. Exceptions are India and the People's Republic of China for which Unesco has no precise figures for 1955. The 17 countries included in this table published a total of 175,930 titles, or a large proportion of world production, the 1955 production figures for 53 countries being 214,360. Figures given cover both books and pamphlets with the

in 1951: "The difficulty is not so much in printing, since there are various machines and techniques in existence which are designed to produce books and other printed matter in small quantity... The difficulty is to find or train competent authors or translators; to obtain supplies of materials (such as paper, type and machinery)... to distribute the finished product under conditions of great distances and poor communications; and above all to find the money."

In India, for example, where the world's largest illiterate population administered by a central government is found, the basic need is to make the population literate in Hindi and in the vernacular languages. The first five year national development plan includes a mass education programme for children and adults.

Among the reading materials needed: textbooks and "follow-up" reading materials. Many literacy campaigns have failed because such materials have been lacking. The basic need is a link between the elementary primer and advanced books, periodicals and other publications which are normally read for pleasure and profit.

UNESCO is helping to encourage writers and translators in India by establishing "literary workshops" and offering awards in literature. Prizes are also offered by the Indian Government for original works in native languages, particularly Hindi. UNESCO is now studying successful projects in South-east Asia, the South Pacific and Latin America, and is developing an advisory service to producing agencies on such matters as low-cost printing of good quality books and their distribution.

The world's fast reducing illiteracy rate is one of the most promising aspects noted in Mr. Baker's report. The development of photo-typesetting to allow rapid composition of Asiatic scripts together with increasing use of modern high speed printing presses in the underdeveloped countries suggest that the next decade will witness a substantial increase in books produced.

Among the many barriers to the free flow of books the imposition of import duties is perhaps the most formidable. Two-thirds of the countries of the world apply import licensing to books, and there are many other irksome formalities which representations made by UNESCO and other bodies have to some extent removed. Twelve per cent of the world's countries levy import duties, 40 per cent charge internal taxes and 70 per cent impose currency restrictions on books.

The U.S.A. charges a duty of five per cent *ad valorem* on books in the English language, books in other languages being duty-free. Largely because of this, Canada maintains a 10 per cent levy on U.S. books though none is imposed on British books. Austria charges importers a 5½ per cent "equalization" tax; Spain and Denmark both impose duties on books in their languages; Italy charges 13 per cent on books bound in leather.

"The revenue collected by these duties can hardly offset the cost of collecting them," Mr. Barker comments. "For example, the annual return from the U.S. Government's import duties on books in the English language cannot exceed $500,000—less than 0.000002 per cent of the total national income. France's 8 per cent tax on the invoice value of imported books yields only about 200 million francs, or 0.00002 per cent of the total national income. Belgium's 4½ per cent *taxe de transmission* can hardly balance the cost of collecting it."

As Mr. Barker remarks, "The principle behind these 'protective duties' is thus anachronistic and unreal... What then is the excuse for these barriers?" (See also UNESCO's manual *Trade Barriers to Knowledge* and article "Violins taxed by the kilogram" in UNESCO COURIER. July-Aug. 1956-U.S. edition Sept.)

Public libraries are at present the biggest buyers of many general books and in some countries they purchase one half of all works distributed. Since no library can contain all books, a comprehensive service for international library loans has been built up. In addition to loans there are many arrangements for exchanging publications. UNESCO's Clearing House for Libraries has working arrangements with centres in almost 50 countries. At present 69 countries exchange 35,000 new titles annually in a plethora of agreements. UNESCO is now working on a single, universal convention to cover all publication exchanges.

# of the book world in 1955

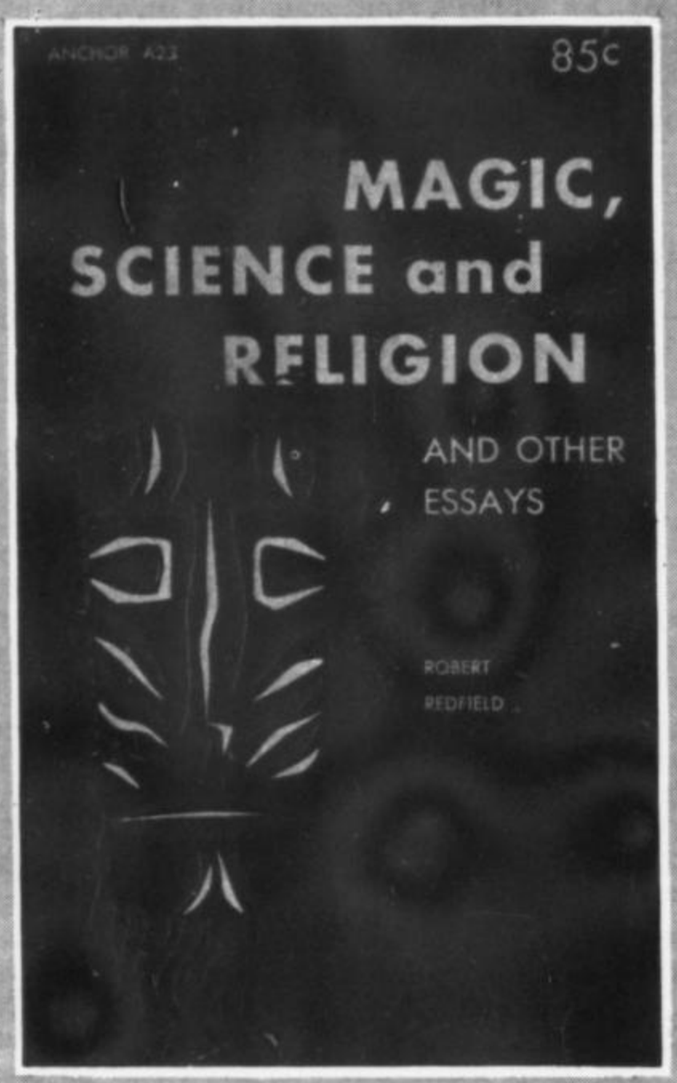
Percentage by subject of total number of titles

| Gen. Works (0) | Philosophy (1) | Religion (2) | Social Sciences (3) | Philology (4) | Pure Science (5) | Applied Science (6) | Fine Arts (7) | Literature (8) | History-Geography (9) | Un. spec. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | ? | ? | 17 | 3 | 7 | 52 | 4 | 12 | ? | 2 |
| 2 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 5 | 27 | 4 | 25 |
| — | 2 | 5 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 16 | 6 | 35 | 10 | — |
| 3 | 2 | 6 | 28 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 5 | 26 | 8 | 1 |
| 3 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 14 | 5 | 37 | 15 | — |
| 1 | 4 | 7 | 9 | ? | 8 | 20 | 5 | 35 | 11 | — |
| 4 | 3 | 5 | 21 | 5 | 4 | 13 | 7 | 29 | 9 | — |
| 3 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 14 | 4 | 16 |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 19 | 2 | 11 | 34 | 3 | 18 | 7 | — |
| 69 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | — | 1 | 15 | 2 | — |
| 2 | 1 | 3 | 17 | 4 | 7 | 25 | 7 | 24 | 10 | — |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | 27 | 2 | 8 | 20 | 8 | 21 | 7 | 3 |
| 7 | 2 | 7 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 43 | 11 | — |
| 2 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 10 | 16 | 5 | 34 | 12 | — |
| 3 | 2 | 6 | 18 | 3 | 7 | 25 | 9 | 17 | 10 | — |
| — | ? | ? | 35 | 2 | 4 | 28 | 8 | 23 | ? | — |
| 11 | 2 | 7 | 15 | 4 | 5 | 12 | 7 | 29 | 8 | — |

exception of those for the U.S.A. and Italy which refer to books only.

(1) If only those works "placed on the market" in the U.S.S.R. were taken into account, the total production would be 30,811 titles.

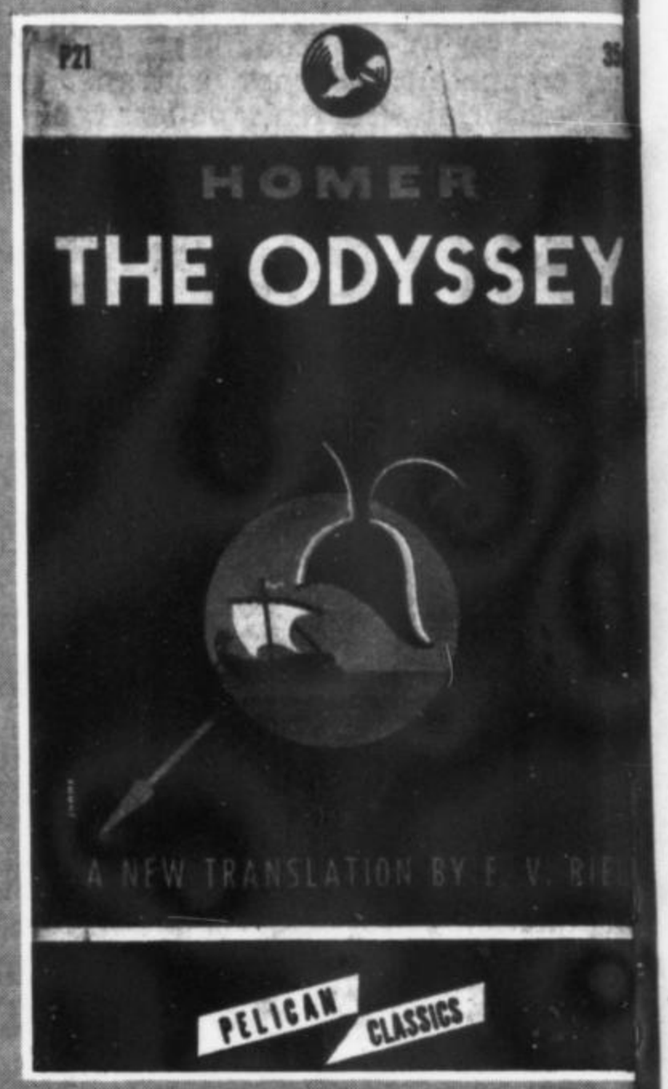
(2) These figures relate solely to U.S. commercial book production (chiefly the industry publishing books intended for the general public) and ignore a large part of book production (government and university publications, those published by churches and organizations, and most of the reports, theses, laboratory and working papers that appear. They do, however, include "pocket books" (an important part of U.S. book production which in 1953 exceeded the production of hard cover books), in all kinds of formats, providing they have 65 pages or more.




POCKET BOOKS

A coin in the slot—and out pops Plato

by Bertha Gaster





ANY Londoner passing the Holy Trinity Church in the Euston Road early in 1935 might well have been taken aback on observing a steady stream of packages disappearing down a mysterious chute in the graveyard, apparently into the bowels of the church. Venturing inside, he would have been still more disconcerted to hear sounds of sinister activity coming from the crypt. There, against walls panelled with marble slabs giving the names and "in memorium" inscriptions of long defunct parishioners, he would have found bales piled ceiling-high, and discovered a man busily checking invoice books in a disused family vault, with piles of money being counted in another.

If half-forgotten tales of smuggling, body-snatching and counterfeiting dens flashed across his mind, he could hardly be blamed. He was not to know that Trinity Church was being used as the improvised headquarters of a new experiment in publishing which would help to change the face of book buying and selling over the greater part of the English-speaking world in the course of the next twenty years, and make a small black and white penguin the symbol of this revolution.

The idea of cheap reprints of more expensive editions was by no means new in 1935 when the Penguin Series was first planned. Something of the sort had existed as far back as the period of ancient Rome. According to Martial, the Roman satirist, who lived in the first century A.D., a copy of his epigrams was selling for five denarii at Atrectur's, while round the corner it could be got at Tryphon's for only half a denarius. And Tryphon was making a good thing out of it too, Martial assures us.

Not very long after the arrival of printing in England came cheap books—"chapbooks"—for the masses, badly printed little pamphlets of popular stories and farces, sold by wandering pedlars, such as Aytolycus sold to the eager villagers in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*. The Puritan masterpiece of John Bunyan—*Pilgrim's Progress*—in the seventeenth century was not only the first European best seller, but perhaps the only work of great literature that began as cheap reading for the cottage and the servants' hall, and ended in de luxe bindings for the connoisseur.

The first great era of cheap reprints, however, came into being in the nineteenth century with the industrial revolution. There was a fresh reading public in the rising middle class, and later, as popular education spread, in a newly-literate working class. There were also the technical means of satisfying their demands through the recently-invented, machine-made paper in which wood pulp replaced the less abundant and more expensive rags, as well as through cheaper railway and canal transport.

Two tendencies can be discerned from the very beginning in the first cheap editions that came off the press in the eighteen-twenties. The first in England, such as Constable's "Miscellany," Murray's "Family Library" and Colburn and Bentley's "Novels", were followed a few years later by the parchment-coloured Tauchnitz reprints of English-language fiction from Germany, now familiar all over Europe for well over a century. They may be roughly divided into the educational and the ephemeral.

Constable the publisher, summed up the ideal of the educational in his phrase "literature for the million". It is no accident, for instance, that in that development period of working-men's colleges and evening schools there was close co-operation between the famous cheap reprint firm of Reclam in Germany with its *Universal Bibliothek,* selling over 31 million copies of classics and philosophy, at approximately ten cents a volume, between 1867 and 1917, and the German Society for Popular Education (*Gesellschaft für Volksbildung*), which set up 137,000 libraries in the same time; nor that the first paperbound books in the United States were sponsored by the Boston Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge.

And the ephemeral? The book that was meant to be read and chucked away; the type of light fiction sold in the 1840's on the newly-opened bookstalls in the newly-opened railway stations for a new type of journey—sitting in comfort in a railway compartment.

Note the distinction. It is still valid today, in a world-wide paperbook industry running into hundreds of millions of copies annually. The two types of reading overlap and merge at the edges, but the difference is still there—classics, fine literature, informative and cultural books this way; sensational fiction, thrillers, westerns, that. "Heavy going" snorts one set of readers; "trash" retorts the other. But the pocket book has provided a bridge.

The real revolution came in two stages. The paperback as we know it—pocket book is the more exact description—began in 1935

when the three Lane brothers in England, on a nominal capital of £100, took a gamble with cheap reprints of good modern books. Their attractive format was something new—the publishers were determined to illustrate that good printing and attractive lay-out cost no more than bad. The striking covers in two-colour horizontal bands—not forgetting the little black and white penguin—were new, and easily recognisable; the size was new, and has become the standard size for nearly all its successors. And newest of all was the price—6d, the price of a packet of cigarettes.

The booksellers shook their heads, but the gamble came off. By 1937 Penguin titles had reached the hundred mark, and the subsidiary ventures began—original commissioned work, like the Pelican Specials on Spain, and Germany and Mussolini and so forth, which exercised a political influence comparable to Gollancz's Left Book Club; the children's Puffins, the books on modern art, archaeology, literary criticism, as well as the Penguin Classics, which sold three quarters of a million copies of their translation of the *Odyssey*.

In 1935 most of the Penguin titles were fiction; in 1956 less than half the ten million sold were fiction; the others—of all sorts—were published with the "explicit intention of providing the public with the varied pleasures and discoveries of the mind". And of the ten million copies sold in 1955, as many as five million went to the overseas market.

A certain number of Penguins were in fact exported to the United States before the war, and it is generally agreed that they gave the first impetus to that country's now colossal industry. For the second and determining stage in the revolution which made the cheap paperback a new and dynamic phenomenon in U.S. publishing, and also spread to many countries of the world, began in 1939 when Robert F. de Graff started the first mass production of modern U.S. paperbacks. Immense thought went into selecting a suitable name; the one finally chosen was simplicity itself— "Pocket Books Inc."; and pocket books has become the generic name by which all types of cheap paperbacks are known in the United States. Most of these pocket books are unabridged reproductions of copyrighted books originally sold at two and a half to three dollars. They run from 25 to 75 cents, generally much the same in format and size, the covers of lacquered paper nearly always carrying a garish illustration designed to catch the passing eye. America is flooded with them.

Consider some of the figures. In 1939 Pocket Books produced 34 titles and over a million and a half copies. For 1953, estimates for sixteen publishing firms indicated 1,061 titles and no less than 292 million copies. Over 5,000 titles, both reprints and originals, covering the classics, fiction, science, travel, philosophy, crafts, etc., are now available. In 1949 about the same number of paperbacked books and hard cover books were published; in 1953 the pocket books outstripped the hard cover books by about 100 million copies.

The size of each edition is equally something new in the publishing world. An average edition of an ordinary thriller or western runs to something between 150,000 and 200,000 copies; best sellers may reach several million. Pocket Books, for instance, recently announced that by the end of 1957 they expect to have sold 75 million copies of Erle Gardner's mystery novels; the stories of Luke Short, a popular writer of Westerns, amount already to 8 million copies. More serious writers also run into fantastic figures; reprints of Erskine Caldwell's novels top the 37 million mark, and one of the latest best sellers, *Bonjour Tristesse* by the young French writer Françoise Sagan, has already sold one million six hundred thousand copies. The total amount paid for reprint rights in 1954 has been estimated at between five and six million dollars.

Pocket books are Big Business to-day. And this is largely due to two new factors—technical advances in printing, and mass methods in sale and distribution. Enormous book presses have been evolved for pocket books, rolling them off from rubber plates at the rate of 12,000 copies for a 192-page book every hour. Special binding methods eliminate the expensive sewing process, new glues give added strength to the spine.

The second factor, however, is more important. Instead of being sold like other books, through bookshops and bookstalls, pocket books were treated as merchandise, and are sold like magazines through a network of wholesalers to any unspecialized outlet that presents itself—news-stands, drug stores, stationery shops, supermarkets, chain stores, big department stores, hotels, airports, railway stations, as well as the conventional bookshops—100,000 outlets instead of 1,500.

Between 30 to 50 million pocket books all over the country are constantly on display in racks supplied by the publishers, jostling for space in the 10-cent stores, or among the ice-cream and coca-colas, cigarettes, watches and what have you of the small town store, changed every so often as new titles come in, and picked up by the passing customer with his cigarettes or his newspaper.

A 25 cent piece popped into a slot machine at an airport will produce a pocket book; bookshops devote special space to them or set up branches on the university campus to sell the text pocket books and "recommended reading" that are being produced every day in ever greater quantity; public libraries are beginning to use them, with "Put N'Take" shelves where the reader puts a pocket book in for every one he takes out; the army and navy buy large quantities, and in some of the big towns special all-pocket-books shops have been set up for the discriminating reader unable to find exactly what he wants in the mass displays on drug store racks.

The vast size of the industry brings its own problems. Some are on the way to being solved. Booksellers no longer fear their competition; nor, on the whole, do publishers of hard cover books. They no longer believe, with Dr. Johnson, who had little faith in cheap editions, that such publishers are "Robin Hoods, who rob the rich in order to give to the poor". Nowadays, indeed, the reprint rights on a serious book first commissioned and published by a pocket book publisher may well be secured by a hard cover publisher for later reproduction, thus reversing the usual process. Not long ago in England, the experiment was tried of bringing out hard cover and pocket book editions simultaneously. It was not a success, but "don't ask me why" said one of the publishers. "Covers dull? Booksellers didn't like the idea? Paperbacks anyway taking a dive just then? You could take your pick".

But competition grows as more firms come into the market, the supply of suitable new books is after all limited, and the get-rich-quick publisher is not after quality. "A good book is one thing, a quick seller another" said a cynical publisher, and many claim that serious literature tends to be swamped in the flood of mysteries with a quick turnover, and lost in the ever more sensational covers which are used even for serious fiction. Some jackets certainly distort the contents. A publisher at an American book trade meeting recalled that a book presented at a recent House of Representatives enquiry into pornography had the following line on the jacket—"'Take me, take me' she said". "Actually" he explained, "what she wanted was to be taken of Philadelphia. *That* was distortion."

In 1953 it was estimated that the total production of pocket books in the United States included 51.3 per cent general fiction, 18 per cent mysteries, slightly over 18 per cent

Cont'd on page 34

# HEMINGWAY, FAULKNER, MAUGHAM :
## THE BIG U.S.S.R. BOOK NEWS FOR 1957

**PASSION FOR BOOKS** is so great in the U.S.S.R. that overcrowded bookstores, especially those in Moscow, are unable to cope with the rush, and make use of services of street vendors, whose stocks are soon snapped up. Moscow, Leningrad and other great cities regularly organize "poetry days" when poets visit the bookshops to read their poems, meet their admirers and autograph copies of their works. Right, Serge Smirnov, a Moscow poet, reads his verses in Bookshop No. 6. (All Moscow's bookshops are numbered). The inscription behind him reads: "Poetry Day. Works of Soviet poets". Left, bookstall in Soviet village.

Photos Soviet Information Service, Paris

A FOREIGN visitor to the Soviet Union last year expressed surprise at the large number of street vendors he saw selling books on a commission basis for the overcrowded bookstores of Moscow. The street vendors are almost as common as the ice cream stands, he reported, adding: "Russia today is a nation of readers, and book production, although immensely increased since the Second World War, has not yet begun to satisfy the demands."

How much of a demand there is and how much production is increasing can be gleaned from some of the latest information on Soviet book production and book translations which has reached UNESCO. Figures for a single year are staggering; those for the 38-year period from 1918 to 1955 (since the Soviet regime came into being) are almost astronomic.

In 1955, according to official U.S.S.R. book industry reports, 54,732 titles of books were published in the Soviet Union, and copies printed topped the one thousand million mark. During the same year, Japan (the world's second largest book producer) published 21,653 titles or less than half the number. Between 1918 and 1955 over 1,268,000 titles were published in the U.S.S.R., in editions totalling more than 18 thousand million copies.

Soviet translation figures are almost as impressive: 14,580 titles by 1,730 foreign authors with a total of over 371 million copies printed during the past 38 years. For 1955 alone, UNESCO's latest volume of *Index Translationum* lists 4,282 translated works published, by far the highest of any country and more than double the figure of Germany, which is in second place.

Today the book industry of the Soviet Union leads all countries of the world both in number of titles published and in number of translated works produced.

A large percentage of Soviet translation figures is made up of Russian-language works published in the many languages of the U.S.S.R., and of translations from these languages into Russian. The production of many language versions for internal consumption has always been an important part of the Soviet book industry. In regular use are 80 chief languages, and some 140 language groups are recognized. Each of the 16 Republics has its own official language. In the past 38 years books have been published in 122 languages, and in 59 languages in 1955 alone. Books have been translated into tongues ranging from Uzbek to Kazakh, but the most important are Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, Lithuanian, Latvian and Armenian, in that order.

As early as 1927 the Soviet Commissariat of Education decided that education should be given as far as possible in the vernacular. Where Russian was not the mother tongue it was to be the compulsory second language. By 1935 teaching was being conducted in more than 80 languages, and the various publishing houses were issuing books in all these languages as well as publishing works in various foreign ones.

### Libraries best customers

IN the Soviet Union, where publishing houses are State- or union-owned, the principal houses are co-ordinated under the Ministry of Culture. An important producer in the country is the Writers' Union, which has its own publishing house for new books. The most successful publications of the Soviet Writers' Union are reprinted in mass editions by the State Literary Publishers. Most Soviet publishing firms are "central institutions" which have headquarters in Moscow and maintain provincial branches, although some are local or are centred in provincial capitals.

A large part of book distribution is handled by a Ministry of Culture organization, the Central Book Sales Administration, which sends the publishers' lists to the 24,000 book sellers in the country and supplies orders. Another outlet is the "Book Post", a department of the Post Office, which supplies public libraries and bookstalls and runs a subscription scheme whereby individual buyers can order books and pay on delivery at their local post office.

Libraries buy more than half of all books published in the U.S.S.R.

Centred in Moscow are the three major translation houses in the Union, each specializing in a particular field. The Foreign Literature Publishers deals exclusively with modern writers who are translated into Russian and other Soviet languages. Its production is not limited to literary works but ranges over the entire field of non-fiction. It is this publishing house which has undertaken the translation and publication of a Russian-language edition of THE UNESCO COURIER (see inside back cover).

The State Literary Publishers is the big classics producer—both Russian classics appearing in Russian and translations of Russian and foreign classics into Soviet languages. Thousands of Russian classics were destroyed by the last war and the publishing house worked overtime for years to restore the supply. The third major translating house is the Foreign Languages Publishers which is limited to works translated from the Russian into languages other than those of the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. is a major book exporter, and most of its exported books are printed in foreign languages. Many of these foreign-language books are also used for internal consumption (*see below*).

The people of the Soviet Union have so great a passion for things cultural that it is said they will read any good book they can lay their hands on. The works of Russian authors such as Pushkin, Gorki, Leon Tolstoy, Chekov Gogol and Mayakowsky are so popular that they have been printed in editions running into millions of copies. Scores of foreign authors have been no less successful. Victor Hugo, Jack London, Mark Twain, Balzac, Jules Verne, Dickens, O. Henry and Maupassant—to name only a few—have been favourites for many years and their translated works have been published in editions totalling many millions of copies.

Most translated of all foreign authors are the French, followed by the Americans, the British and the Germans, in that order. Between 1918 and 1954, nearly 77 million copies of French authors in translation appeared (the volumes would fill a bookshelf running from Paris to Berlin), as well as over 50 million copies of translations of American writers, 38 million volumes by British authors, and 36 million by German writers.

Among French writers, Victor Hugo is by far the most popular with over nine million copies of his books printed in translation during the past 38 years. Charles Perrault's *Fairy Tales* is close behind having topped the eight million mark, while Balzac, Jules Verne and Maupassant are almost tied at six million copies, although Balzac has a slight edge over his two compatriots. (For the names of the 1955 leaders, see page 10)

The most popular U.S. writer in the past 38 years has been Jack London, with Mark Twain and O. Henry close behind him. Among British authors, Dickens has long stood at the top of the list.

## No. 1 American Author

AMONG contemporary Western writers who have become "best sellers" in Russian and other Soviet languages, two American names stand out: Theodore Dreiser and Howard Fast (though neither has managed to obtain anywhere near the same success in the United States). Dreiser is so popular in the Soviet Union that according to one report few cultured persons in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev are unacquainted with at least one of his books. Along with separate translations of his novels, a 12-volume edition of his collected works in Russian was undertaken in 1951. Though sales of his books cannot be compared with those of the old standbys like Jack London, Mark Twain or O. Henry, he is well on his way to becoming a "classic" in the Soviet Union.

Of contemporary French authors, Romain Rolland has probably had the greatest sales. Between 1918 and 1954 almost 2,500,000 copies of his books had been printed, and in 1955 a 14-volume edition of his works was launched. The same year saw the publication of G.B. Shaw's *Devil's Disciple*, A.J. Cronin's *Hatter's Castle*, Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at*

Cont'd on next page

# U.S.S.R. BOOK NEWS

*(Continued)*

*Eboli,* as well as translations of Lion Feuchtwanger, Stefen Zweig, Halldor Laxness, and Martin Andersen Nexö (a 15-volume edition of his works was started in 1951).

Last year, a 570-page volume of Erskine Caldwell's novels and short stories appeared and found a large following. Scores of current British and American books became "best sellers" including Cronin's *The Citadel* and *The Stars Look Down;* Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith,* Sean O'Casey's play *Juno and the Peacock,* Upton Sinclair's *Jungle,* along with 19th century authors such as Thackery, Emily Brontë (*Wuthering Heights*) and Charlotte Brontë (*Jane Eyre*). The year 1956 was also marked by a series of translations of mystery stories and adventure. Rider Haggard, Conan Doyle, William Wilkie Collins (*Moonstone*). H.G. Wells's fantastic stories (*War of the Worlds, Invisible Man,* etc.) appeared in two volumes. This year, James Cain, author of *The Postman Always Rings Twice,* will appear for the first time in a Russian translation.

One of the most talked about novels of recent years is Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea,* published early in 1956 in the first two issues of a new magazine *Inostrannaya* (Foreign) *Literatura.* This was Hemingway's first Russian translation in 17 years. In 1957, several of his novels and many of his short stories are scheduled for publication in a special two-volume omnibus edition.

In fact, 1957 promises to be a bumper year for contemporary foreign works in translation. In a special report to THE UNESCO COURIER, A. Krassilnikov, assistant director of the Foreign Literature Press in Moscow, announces that more than 540 titles are scheduled for translation this year—an increase of 20 per cent over 1956 production. Editions totalling at least seven and a half million copies are to be published of which four million copies will be works of literature—a high proportion for the Soviet Union where political, social and economic publications usually far outnumber literary works. Translations will be made from over 30 foreign (non-Soviet) languages.

## Asian 'firsts' for 1957

WESTERN European and American writers are to receive special attention this year, Mr. Krassilnikov informed THE UNESCO COURIER. Sean O'Casey's selected works will appear for the first time in Russian in a two-volume edition. The first volume by the Irish novelist came off the press in January 1957 while the second is due for publication at the end of the year.

Novels by Cronin, Steinbeck, Sinclair Lewis, François Mauriac, and Vercors are scheduled for publication in Russian this year, as are works by Italian, German, Swiss, Canadian, Swedish and Argentine contemporary writers.

But for Western fiction, the most important translation events of 1957 will be the two-volume Hemingway already referred to, a volume of plays by Somerset Maugham, and a volume of short stories by Nobel Prize winner William Faulkner. The books by Maugham and Faulkner will be the first to appear in the Russian language. Until now only three of Faulkner's short stories have been published in Russian. The first appeared in an anthology in 1934; the second was printed in a magazine in 1935; the third was published last year in *Inostrannaya Literatura.* As Mr. Krassilnikov reports, Faulkner and Maugham are expected to arouse considerable interest among readers throughout the Soviet Union.

Several other "firsts" are in store for Soviet readers this year, the Foreign Literature Press announces. For the first time Indonesian, Burmese and Thai works will be translated into Russian, including a volume of short stories by Tur Pramudia Anat of Indonesia, an anthology of Burmese epic poetry, and a novel (*Facing the Future*) by Si Burapa of Thailand. For the first time too, translations of histories of literature by foreign authors will be published. One general work, dealing with German, Swiss, English and American authors between 1930 and 1940 has already gone to press; the translation of another, on contemporary Icelandic literature, is being completed.

As in past years many novelists and poets from the People's Republic of China and the Popular Democracies of Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia will be translated. Twice as many Yugoslav prose and poetry works will be published in 1957 as compared with last year. (There are numerous book stores in Moscow, Leningrad and other large cities devoted exclusively to the literature of the Popular Democracies.) Some of the authors: Maria Dombrovska (Poland); Sacharia Stanou (Rumania); Dimitri Tolev (Bulgaria); K. Sedlacek (Czechoslovakia); M. Kranets (Yugoslavia) ; Lei Tsia, Chou Li-Bo (China). A collection of short stories by 18 contemporary Indian writers as well as various Indian novels are at present in press.

## Long waiting lists

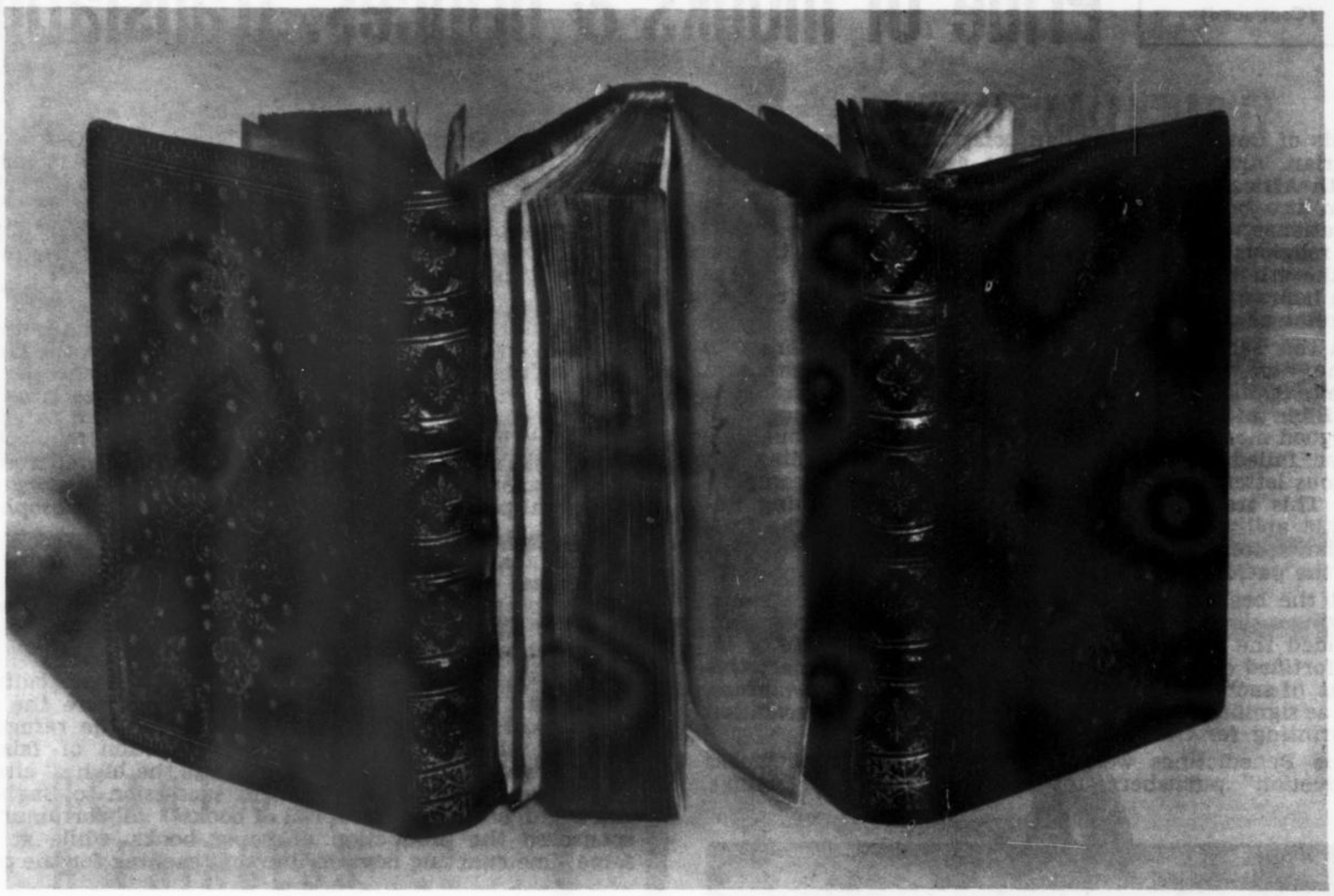
AN interesting sidelight on Russian reading habits can be noted in the number of foreign books read in their original languages. It is not uncommon in Moscow and other cities of the U.S.S.R. to find persons discussing a contemporary French author they have read in the original French or an American or British writer they have read in English.

An American visitor to the Soviet Union recently reported that a young woman showed him her copy of a Soviet edition of O. Henry in English. The size of the edition—20,000 copies—was printed on the end page (as it is in all Soviet books). Compared to Russian-language editions of translated books this was small (a 1956 edition of Dreiser's *The Titan* in Russian was printed in 225,000 copies). "But," commented the visitor, "imagine trying to sell 20,000 copies of a Russian-language edition of, say, Chekov, in the United States."

The complete works of many foreign authors are often available in their original languages in Soviet public libraries, long before translations are undertaken. Thus, all of Faulkner's and Hemingway's books in their American editions have been on public library shelves for years. Their books are in constant circulation and the waiting lists are long (Russians read American, British and French literature in great quantities). Extra English copies of Faulkner and other American authors have recently been ordered for the public libraries to meet the growing demand.

Soviet Information Service, Paris

**ARCTIC CIRCLE BOOKSHOP.** Well-stocked shelves of bookstore at Kirovsk, a Russian town in the Kola Peninsula, north of the Arctic Circle. Kirovsk, which is an important scientific agricultural station, has the only Polar Arctic Botanical Garden in the world.



**ONE IN THREE.** Unusual example of the bookbinder's art, this French 19th century Book of Hours (the part of a breviary containing offices to be said during the day) was divided in three and given a triple binding. Now in a Harvard College collection, U.S.A.

They mass-produced books long before printing presses

# MEN IN LONG BLACK ROBES

*by Jorge Carrera Andrade*

SOME thirty-five years before the start of the Christian era, Latin philosophers gathered in the shade of the columns of the Asinus Pollio public library—the first in Rome—to discuss the fruits of Greek thought as recorded in the library's voluminous papyrus scrolls. These were the troubled times of the Second Triumvirate, the governing coalition of Mark Antony, Octavian and Lepidus, and young Romans, unsettled by the changes which they sensed were imminent, turned with enthusiasm to studies of literature and the arts.

Asinus Pollio, formerly a people's tribune, had retired from politics, but wishing to continue to serve his fellow citizens, he opened an "Academy of Eloquence" in his villa at Tusculum. Here, over the entrance to its library he caused the inscription *Atrium libertatis* ("sanctuary of freedom") to be engraved. Pollio, a great orator, poet, historian and critic, was a widely travelled man having journeyed through North Africa, Spain, Gaul and Macedonia. From one of his moving speeches, Pliny records these famous words: "The fruits of man's intellect are the common heritage." Were there any translations of foreign authors among the Greek books in this first Roman public library? We know of none, probably because Greek writers, satisfied with the glories of their own civilization, considered all the other peoples as barbarians and were not interested either in their language or their literature. They were blind to the brilliance of Hebrew and Egyptian intellectual achievements, and while this may have helped to preserve the originality of Greek thought, it also explained why Greece was surpassed by the Latin world in universality.

All well-educated Romans knew Greek and read the works of Aristotle, Plato and the epic or bucolic poets in the original. Pollio was the first to entrust to his protégés, Horace and Virgil, the task of translating Greek works into Latin. Naturally Virgil, with his love of rural life, chose Theocritus's poems in praise of the countryside, while the peaceful Horace, perhaps out of sheer contrariness, translated the resonant Odes of Pindar. Apart from these works, there were few translations in Pollio's library. The Odyssey, translated much earlier by Livius Andronicus, some comedies adapted by Plautus, and the tragedies in which Naevius the Roman poet and dramatist, attacked the Roman aristocracy more than two centuries before Christ.

Not until the advent of Christianity and the great days of Roman Africa, in the first centuries of the Christian Era, did Latin begin to be used more widely, with the resultant need to include among the treasures of that language the essential works enshrining religious thought, which had hitherto been written in the Hebrew language. Amid the

Cont'd on next page

BLACK ROBES
*(Continued)*

# Pride of monks & princes: translating

sands of Carthage, Tertullian composed his *Apologeticus*. Cyprian, Arnobius, St. Augustine and Rufinus—all from North Africa—undertook the task of translating passages from the books of the Bible into Latin. "The fire of impatience" of which Tertullian spoke seemed to devour the religious writers of the African continent. At the end of the 4th century, North Africa was considered as the true home of Latin-Christian literature and Latin reigned supreme as the language of learning.

In this same century, Pope Damasus—whose library in Rome was a centre of learning—asked the Dalmatian monk, Sophorius Hieronymus (St. Jerome) to translate the Bible into Latin. After 23 years of work, during which the good monk, although beset by every kind of tribulation, never failed to write 1,000 lines a day (including his famous letters and commentaries), the task was completed. This translation, which testifies to astonishing linguistic ability, is still known as the *Vulgate*. The Dalmatian scholar, who was canonized, went down to posterity as "the patron saint of translators".

At the beginning of the 6th century, an Italian monk, wearing a simple black habit, symbolical of his austere life, founded the Monte Cassino monastery on the site of an old fortified castle and set up the Benedictine Order; this event, of such importance in the history of human culture, was as significant for the Middle Ages as was the invention of printing for the modern world.

The Benedictines were, in fact, Europe's first "mass production" publishers, for these thousands of monks,

From "Bookmen's Bedlam", © W. H. Blumenthal 1955

**BOOKS IN CHAINS.** Famous old library at Hereford Cathedral, England, dating from the days when librarians chained their books to the shelves. An ancient monastic library, it still retains several rare manuscripts and relics. At one time parts of the book stacks were dismantled and used elsewhere in the cathedral, but in recent years the original old woodwork has been restored to its proper place. (See also Unesco Courier, June 1953, "Books without chains")

working as copyists and illuminators, made the reproduction of manuscripts the core of their monastic activities. Eight centuries after the foundation of the Benedictine Order, there were 17,000 Benedictine monasteries in Europe—in other words, 17,000 workshops for the production of books.

From the cells of Cluny, Citeaux or Subiaco, flowed countless volumes of beautiful manuscripts—each chapter beginning with a large capital letter, ornamented with miniatures and flowers, and the whole luxuriously bound—which filled the libraries of convents, palaces and the "cathedral schools", the precursors of universities. One of the most extraordinary phenomena in the history of the Middle Ages, was the speed with which books spread from one end of Europe to the other.

Among the "best sellers" of the early Middle Ages was the Latin translation of Aristotle's works by Boethius, Minister of Theodoric the Great, King of the Ostrogoths. The VIIth century had a superb translator in Isidore of Seville, regarded as the man who continued the work of Saint Jerome, and whose *Etymologies*—one of the first encyclopaedias of the Christian world—was widely distributed through the "editions" issued, one after the other, by the Benedictine monks.

The great cultural movement of the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries swept like a fertile tide over the lands of France and on to the island kingdom of Alfred the Great. That learned monarch, once he was able to sheathe the sword with which he had expelled the Danes from his shores, not only founded Oxford University and extended his protection to men of letters, but also himself undertook to translate St. Augustine and Orosio and prepared an Anglo-Saxon version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and of several parts of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*.

Finally, in the 10th century a new France stirred to life in the apartments of southern castles, surrounded by grapevines and lulled by the music of Latin cicadas. France became a great cultural centre, where the influences of East and West were blended and the most illustrious schools of art inspired the whole of Europe.

Then, in the 11th century, came the great cultural awakening in Spain. Cordova and Toledo were the two intellectual poles of the period: Cordova—the refuge of Eastern scholars—was the farthest bastion of Islamic culture, while Toledo was recognized as the highest citadel of Western thought. Cordova, in succession to Baghdad and Cairo, became the "capital of books". Abderraman III sponsored the production of paper books, while at the same time enacting laws on literacy teaching for the poor.

## The great linguists of Toledo

NEVER had a people displayed such a taste for reading. Under the protection of the Caliph, thousands of copyists and booksellers prospered. Bibliophiles, bookbinders, illuminators and illustrators were welcomed at the Court. Scholarly translators, who usually spoke four languages—Arabic, Greek, Hebrew and Latin, enjoyed the sovereign's special favour. The library of Alhacam II was the pride and glory of those days; it contained 400,000 books.

The imperial city of Toledo, crowned by rocky heights and encircled by the blue ribbon of the Tagus, became a hive of culture when King Alfonso VI retook it from the Moors. Toledo collected the Arab texts and made them known to the West. Thus the Moslem occupation of the peninsula bore its fruits, and world culture was enriched by the contribution of Islamic thought. Here, in Toledo in the 12th century, was founded, for the first time in European history, an international institute of translators, for the purpose of spreading knowledge of the most important works of the age.

The "Toledo College of Translators" was composed of learned men from various countries: Gerard of Cremona, an Italian philologist; Daniel de Morlay, an English gentleman attached to the court of Richard Cœur de Lion, Domingo Gundisalvo, a Spanish archdeacon; Hermann, a German monk who enjoyed the patronage of King Manfredo of Sicily, and who, despite his foreign origin, became Bishop of Astorga.

The learned men belonging to this illustrious school of translation also included Juan Hispalense, a converted Jew who translated Ptolemy, another Englishman, Michael Scott, who introduced Averroism into southern Europe and who won a mysterious reputation for necromancy at the court of Frederick II and, lastly, Juan de Toledo, the Benedictine monk, alchemist, poet and prophet, who became a Cardinal and was even on the point of acceding to the pontifical throne in Rome.

Gundisalvo's most famous translation was of a work in Arabic, the *Fountain of Life*—a monument of Judaic philosophy and an encyclopedia of a system of science based on metaphysics written by Salomon Ben Gabirol, a native of Malaga. This scholar and philosopher, whom the

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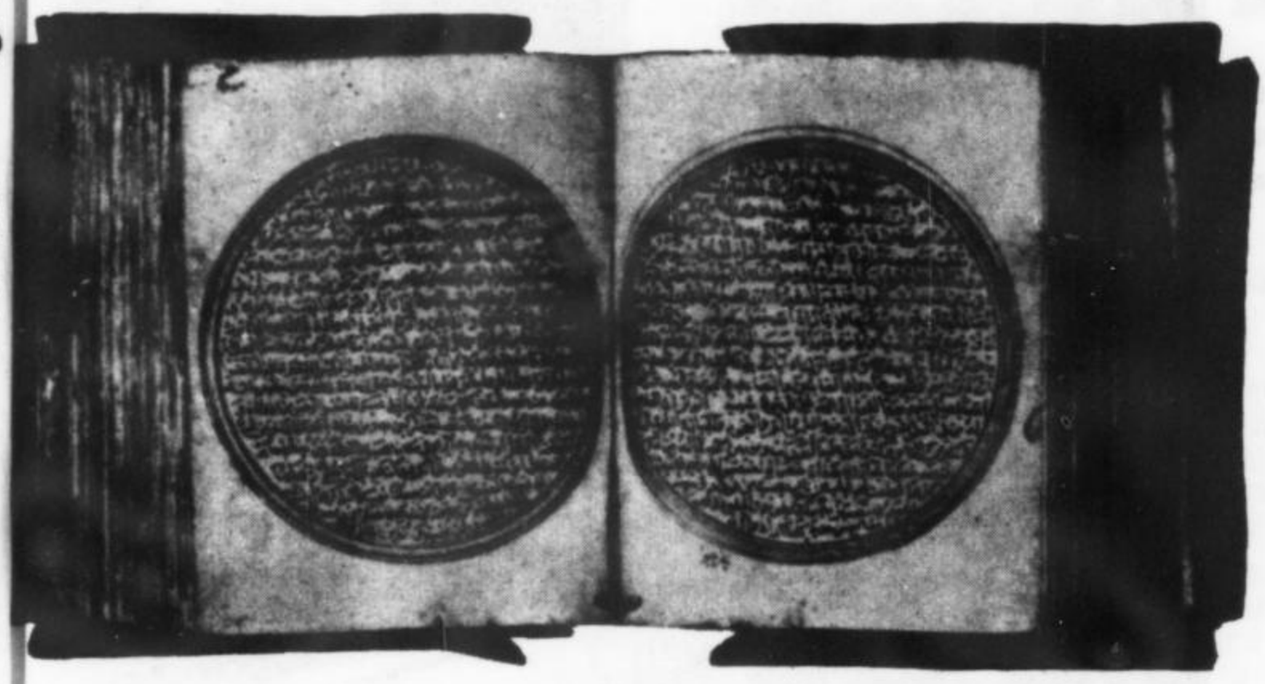


## PINHEAD CALLIGRAPHY

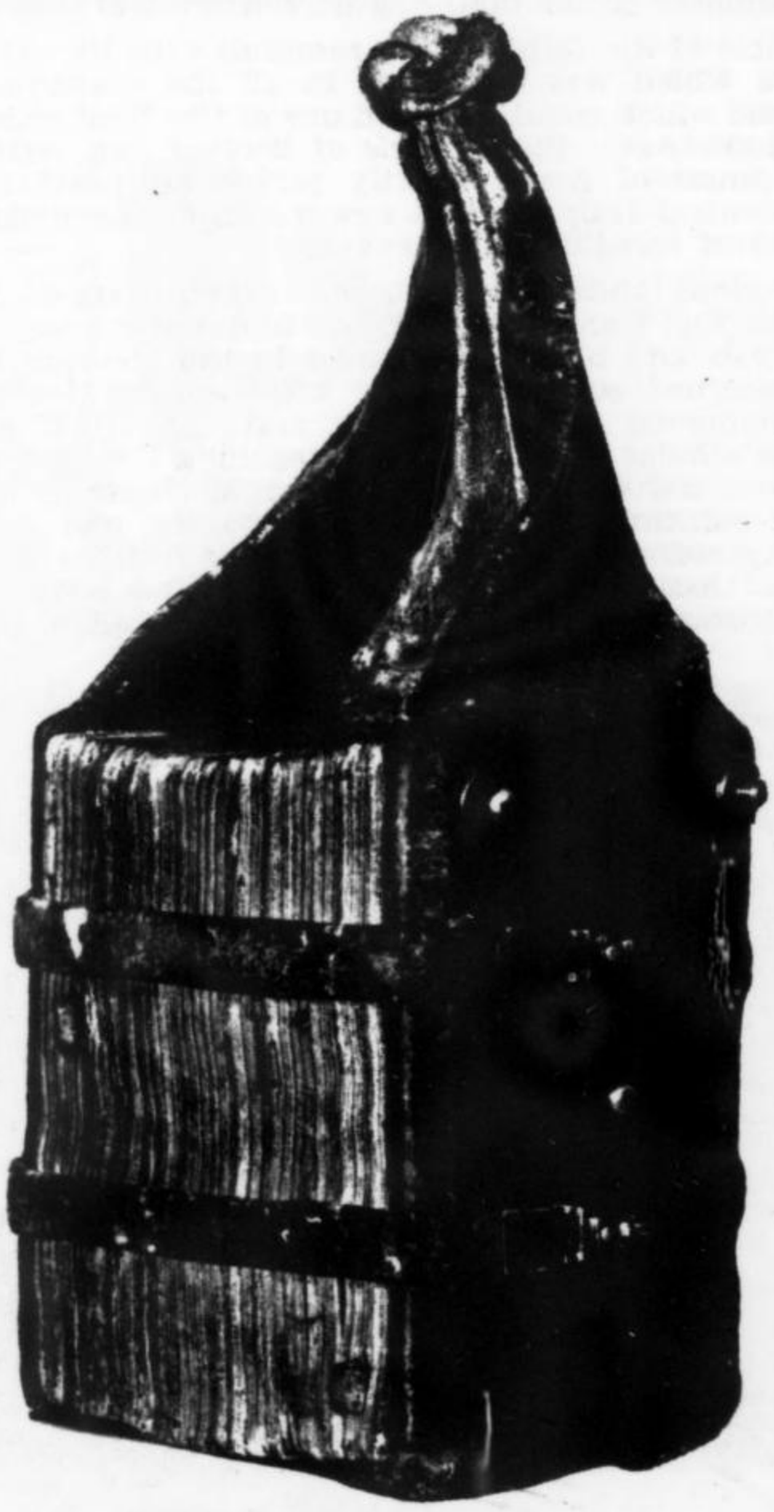
**Among the wide selection of religious texts in Lilliputian form is this miniature Koran (actual size shown here) made by a 17th-century calligraphist. Another Koran, even more unusual and precious because of its octagonal shape, was written in Persian about 1800 in microscopic characters, on gold-edged, one and a half inch pages. Its shape made it a collection showpiece for there are probably fewer octagonal books than Gutenberg Bibles in existence nowadays.**

© W. H. Blumenthal 1955

## HEART FOR A PRINCESS

**Heart-shaped book in calf binding, hand-tooled in gold, made about 1590 by Casper Meuser, court binder to the Prince Elector of Saxony. Measuring eight inches across, it contains two little works—a book of prayers and domestic household rules. Bound for the Princess Anna von Sachsen, it recalls another famous book, the lily-shaped missal made for Diane de Poitiers in 1555. A singular circular book was also made by Casper Meuser.**

From "Bookmen's Bedlam" © W. H. Blumenthal 1955

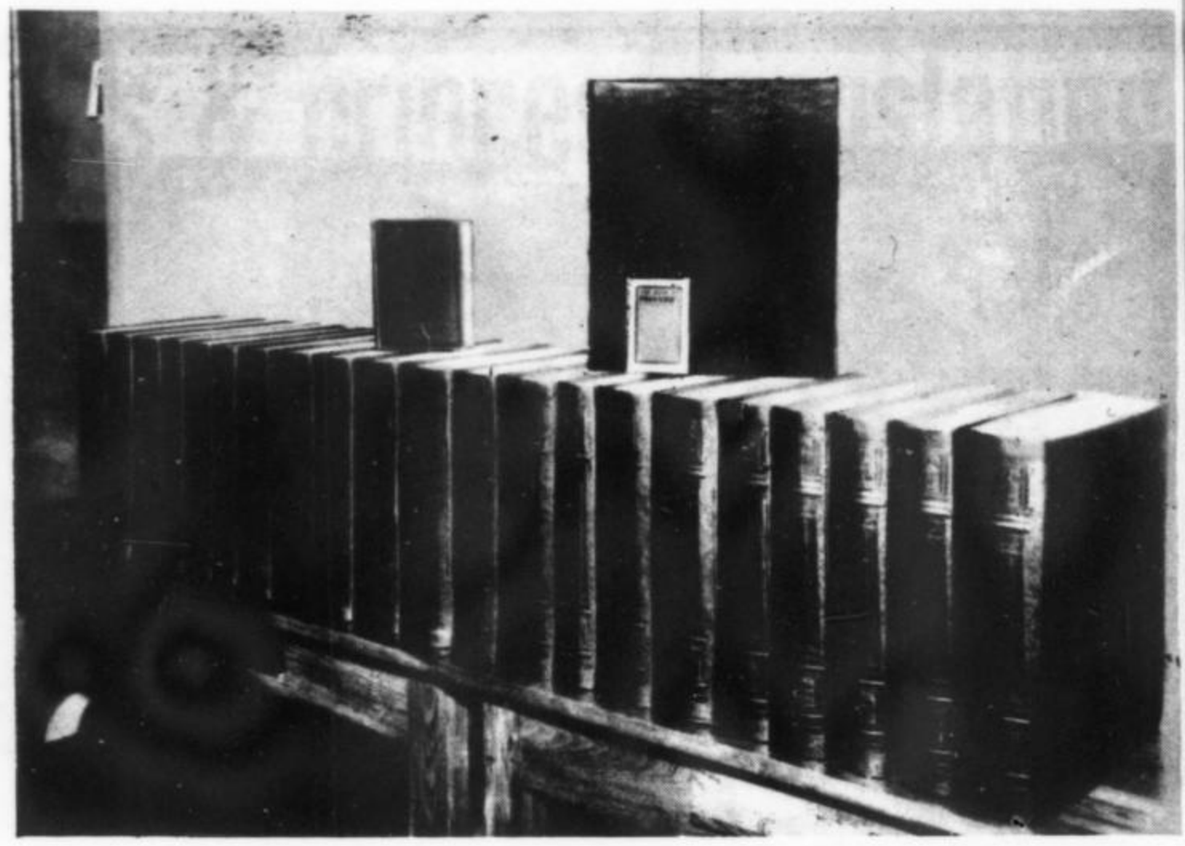


## FOR NOBLE GIRDLES

**This strangely-shaped volume is a "girdle book", bound into a soft doeskin pouch and intended to be carried fastened on a belt or girdle. It is a Latin breviary in manuscript written in 1454, measuring three inches by four. Few of these devotional girdle books, once common to the waistbands of nobles, still exist.**

From "Bookmen's Bedlam" © W. H. Blumenthal 1955

# BLACK ROBES *(Continued)*



**BRAILLE BIBLE** for blind fills these 21 huge volumes produced in 1923 and occupies over two yards of shelf space. New era for blind opened when recording of entire books was initiated in 1934 in U.S.A. Talking Books of the Bible now exist on 169 discs each playing for a half hour or a total of just over 84 hours. The longest novel recorded, Tolstoy's " War and Peace " needs 119 records and a total listening time of nearly 60 hours as against 9 hours for a book of average length.

© W. H. Blumenthal 1955

Spaniards called Avicebron, wrote his philosophical doctrines in Arabic and his poetry in Hebrew. From the pens of the Toledo translators, there emerged, in Latin garb, the works of Euclid, Avicenna, Algazel, Aristotle and others who contributed to the flowering of Western learning.

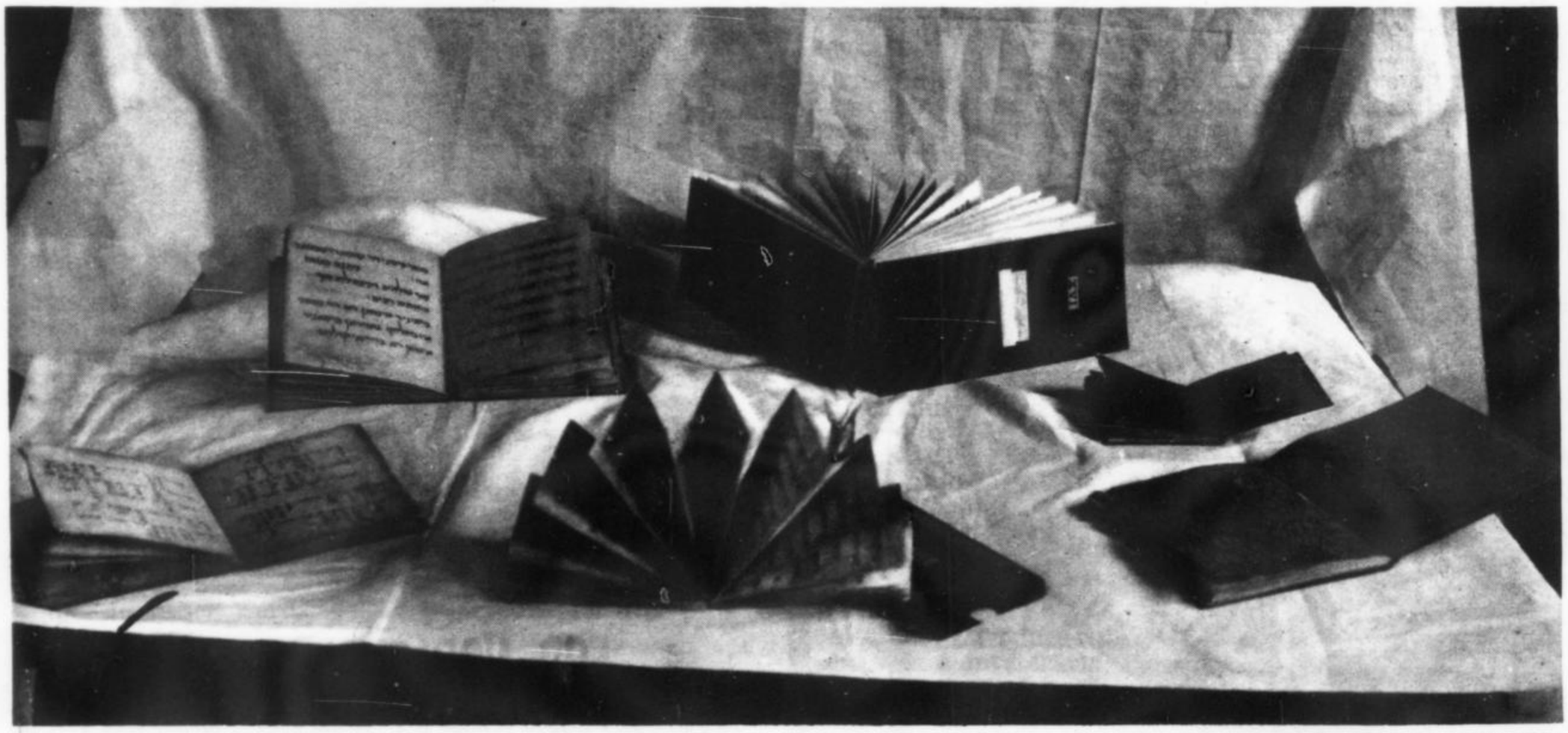
The whole of the 13th century resounds with the echoes of a book which was translated in all the countries of Europe, and which could be called one of the "best sellers" of the Middle Ages: the *Canticle of Brother Sun,* written by St. Francis of Assisi, shortly before his death. In Umbria, central Italy, arose a new vision of the world, a philosophy of humility and meekness.

The gracious landscapes of Italy left their mark on this new intellectual trend, which set out to discover man—the man of flesh and blood, as opposed to the metaphysical being concerned solely with the after-world. It was a search conducted through letters and the visual arts. While the scholar Leo Pilatus was teaching Greek to the Italians and translating Homer, the artist Giotto di Bondone was painting figures of intense realism, and giving lifelike expression to the characters of his frescoes in the Basilica at Assisi. The shades of Dante and Boccaccio, strolling through the Florentine arcades, seemed to meet Geoffrey Chaucer, the first great English poet, who was visiting the cities of Italy as the envoy of the King of England. The English writer and traveller subsequently won a reputation as a great translator of the Italians.

The age of humanism and the Renaissance opened gloriously with the appearance of the printed book which, though regarded askance by the bibliophiles, was to transform the face of the world by bringing into the humblest home knowledge which had hitherto been restricted to the palace and the monastery, and reserved for the enjoyment of princes, scholars and prelates.

The Benedictine monks, who in earlier centuries had spread learning by means of illuminated manuscripts, were the first to recognize the importance of Gutenberg's invention and they installed the first printing press after Gutenberg in the monastery at Subiaco, near Rome.

At all events. the translation of books was regarded until the 15th century, as valuable literary work, comparable to the writing of the originals and many famous men chose to work as simple translators. One wonders for what obscure reasons translating was reduced to its present estate as the "Cinderella of Literature".



© W. H. Blumenthal 1955

**CHINESE SYNAGOGUE MANUSCRIPTS.** The city of Kai-fung, on the Yellow River about 350 miles south of Peking, is one of the most historic of the early settlement sites of China. It was long the centre of the main Jewish colony in China, a few remnants of which still exist today. Records show that a synagogue was built there in 1190 A.D. from which the ancient Hebrew manuscripts shown above originated. Fifty-nine of these unique manuscripts, composed of several folds of thin Chinese paper pasted together, are now preserved in the library of the Hebrew University of Cincinnati (U.S.A.). Photo shows various prayers with a Memorial Book in Chinese characters, hymns in Hebrew and Jewish-Persian, New Year prayers folded in shape of a fan, a book of morning and Sabbath prayers damaged by flood waters.

# WHAT HAS TV DONE TO BOOK READING?

*by Henry Cassirer*

WHAT is television doing to the reading of books? The head of the Detroit Public Library's home-reading service put it this way in an address to the American Library Association: "When TV was new, libraries noted a falling off of readers but as the novelty wore off, people began to return to the library to ask for books on subjects brought to their attention on the TV screen." Or as a woman said apologetically to a librarian at Cleveland, "I remember reading it years ago but it never meant as much as seeing it last night. Now I want to read it again."

This double effect of television, first replacing book-reading and then drawing attention to specific books through dramatic or literary programmes, is noted also in England. "Undoubtedly reading is the chief sufferer of television," said a speaker at the 1956 conference of the British Library Association. An estimated British television public of 16 million had to be compared with about 13 million registered borrowers at public libraries. Less than a third of the people with television sets were estimated to read to any extent and the remainder read few books or none at all. But concurrently, issues of books from a large number of British public and county libraries continue to rise year after year, reported the same speaker, and the tastes of the reading public have changed.

Fiction had suffered, but non-fiction had benefitted. Other librarians confirmed that television was freeing them from the obligation to cater for the light entertainment reader and opening the way for them to serve readers with more serious tastes as well as to win new readers.

A certain decline in book reading is noted in the United States. It is not clear whether this is exclusively due to television. Nevertheless it is significant that in 1954, Americans spent about 500 million dollars for books, 13 million less than in 1953, though the population increased by about 2.8 million people in the same period. During the same year, Americans spent 600 million dollars just to get their radio and television sets repaired. An article in "U.S. News and World Report" of September 1955 noted: "There are more people, and particularly children, in the United States than there were 10 years ago. They have more money to spend yet they are spending less for books and little more for other reading material than they used to spend."

This sombre trend is offset by indications that television is stimulating the reading of significant books. Perhaps there is here, too, a change in reading habits as in the United Kingdom, with television supplying the feature and fiction entertainment formerly sought in books, and making such entertainment available to large sections of the population who never read books before, while at the same time drawing attention to literature which formerly had only a very small audience.

When the American writer and biographer, Carl Sandburg, was portrayed in a special nation-wide programme, booksellers and librarians throughout the country reported such a run on Sandburg books during the next week that all their stocks were exhausted. In Los Angeles, Professor Baxter, professor of literature at the University of South California, broadcast a weekly talk on Shakespeare which was viewed by an estimated 400,000 persons and later rebroadcast in other parts of the country. These programmes, as well as numerous dramatic presentations of Shakespeare on American TV, have created a vast new audience and reading public for the Bard. The influence of television on book-reading is not a static phenomenon. Television can replace book reading but it can also be used to promote it actively. A 1955 report from the Cleveland public library notes an increase in borrowings and adds significantly, "While a reading boom traceable to TV influence is not peculiar to Cleveland, neither is it a national phenomenon. It seems to occur chiefly in cities where a well-directed library staff with a far-seeing plan in mind actively does something to capitalize on TV-prompted interest." The library, for instance, prominently displays inside its main lobby and in display windows outside, information regarding outstanding future TV programmes.

The presentation of recent books through interviews with their authors and visualization by means of films, photographs and other applicable pictures, is the feature of one of the most important weekly television programmes in France, *Lecture Pour Tous*. Regular interviews with authors figure on TV in Germany, Italy and elsewhere.

Thanks to this stimulating power of television, British librarians took a rather cheerful view about TV's influence at their recent conference. As *The Times* reported, "It was felt that TV is managing to create both among adults and children a lively new reading public. There are those whose interest in more or less serious subjects has been aroused and who have gone almost straight from their sets to their libraries in search of books on subjects like archaeology. And it is a common experience that television serial broadcasts set strong temporary fashions for such writers as Jane Austen, Galsworthy and Dickens. All in all, so far the librarians seem to think that the good byproducts of TV outweigh what harm it may do."

# Publisher's Dilemma

Publishing is not the profitable business which many people suppose it to be. In fact in many countries today publishers actually lose money in the physical production and sale of books. These startling findings are revealed in UNESCO's *Books for All* by R.E. Barker who points out that publishers today have to look to subsidiary rights such as book clubs, serialization and reprints in order to compensate for losses they incur from original book production.

Recently nine leading general and fiction publishers provided figures for the British Publishers Association which show that the average discount to book sellers is 39.07 %; average royalty to authors 11.88 %; average cost of production 28.24 % ; average overheads (including advertising) 17.20 %; and average profit only 3.61 %. The average "profit" of 3.61 % is reduced almost to nothing when allowance is made for the depreciation of stock.

Depreciation is an important factor. A book that promises to sell 5,000 copies may only sell 2,000. The balance represents a potential loss of 3,000 times the published price, and within six months unsold books may represent one-tenth of their original price. Of course the book may sell steadily and even call for a reprinting, but sales only occasionally exceed expectations. When they do publisher and author naturally expect to benefit, since no one pays the publisher for his failures. Such failures have to be regarded as investment, but they can easily turn a publisher's "profit" into loss. Published prices are necessarily related to the nature and length of a book and to its potential sale. If the publisher sets his prices too high, his books will not sell. If his prices are too low, he will go out of business. As Sir Stanley Unwin points out in his book *The Truth about Publishing:* "It is easy to become a publisher but difficult to remain one; the mortality rate in infancy is higher than in any other trade or profession."

# Austria is best-off for bookshops : one for every 2,745 people

A bookseller's job is more complicated than most people think. Besides a thorough knowledge of books and publishing, he must decide what books are likely to sell, have a large stock to meet demand and yet avoid overstocking. He must be able to advise customers on any book from a juvenile for 7-year-olds to to latest studies on astronomy.

In some European countries booksellers have to pass exams and serve apprenticeships before they can start in business. Norway insists on a special examination plus 10 years experience at the trade before a bookseller is qualified to open a shop of his own. (If he wants to take over an existing shop six to eight years is considered enough.) Great Britain and Ireland have recently organized courses in book selling. As a rule standards of service are higher in countries where entry to the trade is subject to specific qualifications.

According to UNESCO's *Books for All,* Austria leads the world in number of bookshops in relation to population: one bookshop for every 2,745 persons. Denmark is second with one bookshop for every 4 000 people. Next in order come: Australia (4,315), Italy (4,896), the United Kingdom (6,000), Netherlands (7,281), Belgium (7,609), U.S.S.R. (8,708), Federal German Republic (11,970), France (12,023), Switzerland (12,375), Sweden (13,195), Norway (14,986), Canada (18,125), the U.S.A. (18,616).

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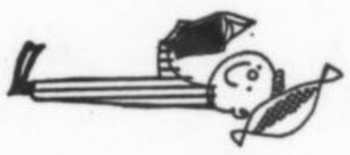
**RAW MATERIAL** of education. Printer inspects assembled texts and illustrations for a Bolivian primary school reader before pages are printed. Illustrations include Inca and Aymara Indian motifs. Unesco now co-operates in the work of Bolivia's Pillapi educational research centre.

# TIDBITS *(Cont'd from page 16)*

(one third children) and a collection of 32,000 volumes. Some 34,000 people were enrolled in the lending service.

### Odd-shaped and occult

In a collection of occult books belonging to a Parisian collector which were sold some years ago was a vellum manuscript written and cut in triangular shape. This French treatise of ceremonial magic and alchemy was executed in cipher and cabalistic symbols about 1750 by the Comte de St. Germain (Marquis de Betmar), and is known as a *grimoire*



or book of magic spells and rituals of the black art. (*Bookmen's Bedlam*)

### Fiction tops the list

Recent statistics collected by UNESCO show that fiction is the first choice of most countries. But in choosing books on particular subjects, British and American readers are likely to choose a book on a technical subject or science or failing these, travel or biography. Indian or Nigerian readers will choose something on the social sciences, next biography, then literature. Social sciences are not very popular in Thailand, travel, biography and history being overwhelmingly the popular choice. Choice in the Philippines is more similar to U.S. and U.K. patterns, literature being the most popular subject. (UNESCO)

*Drawings on this page and pages 15-16 are by Gerhard Oberländer taken from* Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen (*Statistics on books and the book industry*) 1955, 1956, *published by Borsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels E.V., Frankfurt am Main.*

## Some best sellers in science

CHARLES DARWIN'S *Origin of Species* has probably reached more people over the years than any other scientific book published, according to the British science magazine "Discovery" in a short report on scientific best sellers in Great Britain (December 1955 & February 1956 issues). It is almost impossible, the magazine says, to find any exact figures for the sales of the famous book. One reason given for its success: Darwin's plain, unpretentious but very lucid style.

Darwin's book on worms (*The Formation of Vegetable Mould through the Action of Worms,* 1881) sold 8,500 copies in about two years, but even this figure, "Discovery" says, "is more than many so-called popular science books of modern times sell."

Books on astronomy have been among the most popular of our times. Sir James Jeans's *The Mysterious Universe* (1930) sold well over 240,000 copies in the Cambridge University Press edition alone, and the book is now available in a score of languages from Bengali to Finnish. Most successful British book on astronomy produced since the war is probably F. Hoyle's *Nature of the Universe* (over 110,000 copies); his latest book *Frontiers of Astronomy* (1955) sold 13,000 copies in the United Kingdom within six months of publication.

Another highly successful book has been *King Solomon's Ring* by the Austrian naturalist Konrad Lorenz: over 300,000 copies sold of this fascinating account of Lorenz's studies of behaviour and "language" of animals. Surprisingly, Einstein's *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory* (probably his easiest book on relativity to understand) sold 32,000 in its English edition.

The recent Pelican book *Five Hundred Years of Printing* mentions a few science best sellers: Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us,* Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki, La Vie des Abeilles* by Maeterlinck; *The Universe Around Us* by Sir James Jeans.

Other best sellers in science: Ceram's *Gods, Graves and Scholars;* the two Kinsey studies on male and female sexual behaviour; *The World of Mathematics* by James Newman; *Science for the Citizen* and *Mathematics for the Million* by Lancelot Hogben. Science textbooks used in schools and universities can sell exceedingly well and sometimes reach the six-figure bracket.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# SIXTY YEARS OF U.S. BEST SELLERS

A LIST of the best selling books in the United States since 1895 is given in a recently-published book by Alice Payne Hackett entitled "Sixty Years of Best Sellers".

The first ten titles in her list are :

*In His Steps* by Charles Monroe Sheldon (1897), 8,000,000 copies.

*The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* by Benjamin Spock (1946), 7,850,000 copies.

*God's Little Acre* by Erskine Caldwell (1933), 6,582,553 copies.

*Better Homes and Gardens Cook Book* (1930), 5,806,585 copies.

*Gone With the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell (1937), 5,000,000 copies.

*How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie (1937), 4,877,511 copies.

*I, the Jury* by Mickey Spillane (1947), 4,441,837 copies.

*The Big Kill* by Mickey Spillane (1951), 4,158,840 copies.

*A Message to Garcia* by Elbert Hubbard (1898), 4,000,000 copies.

*My Gun is Quick* by Mickey Spillane (1950), 3,912,419 copies.

A list of best sellers for the last sixty years in the U.S. recently compiled by the "New York Times" shows that Sinclair Lewis, Thornton Wilder and John Steinbeck made the grade. Faulkner and Hemingway did not. Foreign writers on the list :

England: H.G. Wells (*Outline of History*) ;

France: André Maurois (*Disraeli*);

Germany: Erich Maria Remarque (*All Quiet on the Western Front*), and Franz Werfel (*Song of Bernadette*);

Spain: Blasco Ibanez (*Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*);

Sweden: Axel Munthe (*Story of San Michele*);

Finland: Mika Waltari (*The Egyptian*).

Only two writers succeeded in staying on the best seller list for more than a year, both women : Pearl Buck (*The Good Earth*), and Margaret Mitchell (*Gone With the Wind*). There was one book which kept top place for three years—a new version of the Bible.

# Pocket books *(Cont'd from page 23)*

westerns, 6 per cent non-fiction, and about 7 per cent miscellaneous. Practically every type of book is reflected in pocket books to-day; science and technology; literature, from Chaucer to the latest *avant-garde* writers; translations of the great classics and modern best sellers of Europe and elsewhere; "Do It Yourself" manuals, cookbooks, and reference books; here classics re-issued with screaming "skylines" to tie up with the latest movie releases, there a new Dictionary advertising itself as "*not made* into a movie"; all of them opening up new worlds for a whole new world of readers.

The Midwestern housewife in a small town with no library writes: "If you knew how bored I get looking after two small children, doing housework and seeing the same old neighbours day after day, you'd understand what a godsend your inexpensive books have been". A man wrote to the publisher of the 35-cent edition of the *Odyssey*— "Just read the *Odyssey!* Boy, that guy Homer sure can write! Do you have any other books by him?"

Pocket books are published now in every corner of the world, many of them indistinguishable from their American prototype save in their language. In England Penguins have been followed by a number of others in the same field. In France, though the booksellers are still wary, the pocket book reprint of classic authors has reached out to a new public, the student, the little midinette, the working man from St. Denis and Roanne. Zola, for instance, is one of the authors who continue to enjoy great popularity.

In Germany, where some 25 million copies of pocket books have been sold between 1951 and 1955, various community groups have also organized the publication of selected paperbacks, sometimes in superior format and binding, just as in Israel the only successful attempt to publish general pocket books was that organized by the big labour union of the country, the Histraduth with voluntary committees formed in factories, business firms and collective farms to push the sale. Both in Israel and Norway books are taken so seriously that the average reader prefers the hard cover to add to his library.

In some countries, like Belgium and Spain, the experiment has not succeeded; in Italy, on the other hand, half the books published annually are paperback. The Soviet Union, the only country to compare with the United States in the size of its literate population, has no pocket books; there the average hard cover book sells cheaply at 6 or 7 roubles. And though the spread of pocket books has reached around the world, no country has attacked the question with the mass methods of the U.S., nor invested the same sums of moneys in expensive machinery and marketing networks.

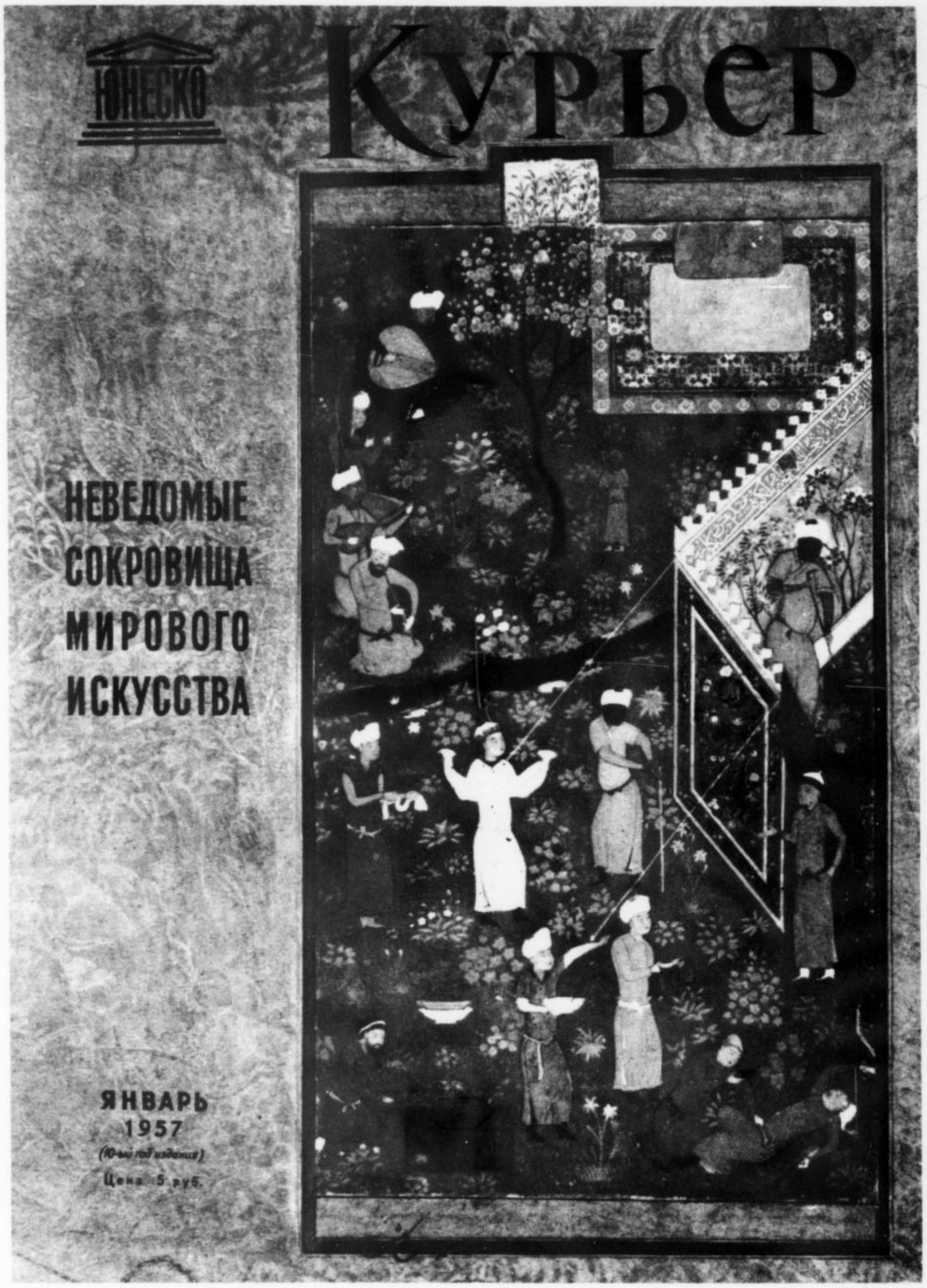
No one can foretell the future ; it may well be that with the gradual spread of literacy to the vast populations of India, Africa and the Far East, the future of the cheap pocket book as a cultural weapon of the first order may well outstrip any position it has achieved today. But what it has done today is to make the literature and wisdom of the world available to millions of men and women ignorant before of its pleasures and possibilities. It is now there for them to take—for the price of a packet of cigarettes.

# UNESCO COURIER IN RUSSIAN

The Unesco Courier is happy to announce the creation of a Russian-language edition. The Russian edition, translated and printed in Moscow, has now been launched with the January 1957 issue and, like the English, French and Spanish editions, will appear monthly. The Unesco Courier is thus privileged to become the first large-circulation, general magazine of international standing edited outside the Soviet Union to be translated and published regularly in the U.S.S.R. Publication of the Russian edition has been entrusted by the Commission of the U.S.S.R. for Unesco to the "Foreign Literature Press" in Moscow, the chief publisher of modern foreign literature in the Soviet Union.

The Unesco Courier is now published in English, French, Spanish and Russian. A small Japanese version is published in Tokyo, and a Danish version in Copenhagen.

Readers interested in receiving the Russian edition may place their subscriptions with our regular Sales Agents (listed below) at the same rate as that of the other language editions.

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# Speaking of books

"I have to learn to type. My second novel is going too slowly."

"It's all a matter of taste, but there're writers I've liked better."

"Could you gentlemen tell us if that's Don Quixote's windmill?"

"Boy! Am I glad you turned out to be a writer!"

"How can you stand Rabelais for breakfast?"

"To think Shakespeare walked these very streets!"

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